DOH refuses to issue ban list of Chinese food

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr. and Ronnel W. Domingo

NEITHER THE DEPARTMENT OF Health nor the Bureau of Food and Drugs, agencies which have called on the public to avoid consuming Chinese-made milk and milk products, issued any list of the banned products.

But the DOH has started monitoring children with kidney problems in government hospitals to trace if they were exposed to contaminated milk from China.

DOH REFUSES A6

WORLD / A19

Obama has 9-point lead over McCain in aftermath of Wall St. turmoil

BUSINESS / B1

Warren Buffett buys $5-B stake in Goldman Sachs

NEWS / A3

Army has P1.6-B unliquidated cash advance since 2003

WORLD / A19

Finland in mourning after school massacre left 11 dead

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Thursday, September 25, 2008 ★★ 6 sections / Vol. 23 / No. 292 P18 www.inquirer.net

OFWs urged to reach kith and kin via Internet

By Margaux C. Ortiz

SOMETIMES, FOR homesick overseas Filipino workers (OFWs), a willy "shoutout" or a simple "smiley" shared with loved ones across

OFWS URGED A4

Congress resists bailout

COMMITTED TO PEACE President Arroyo declares peace talks with the MILF will resume once the "responsible elements" of the Moro separatist group regain control during her address at the opening of the 63rd United Nations General Assembly on Tuesday at UN headquarters in New York City (Story on Page A2.)

US lawmakers demand changes in Bush $700-B rescue package

WASHINGTON—DEMOcratic and Republican senators dug in their heels, pushing back against dire warnings from top economic officials of recession, layoffs and lost homes if Congress did not approve quickly the Bush administration's $700-billion financial bailout plan.

But lawmakers scoffed at the proposed bailout's enormous size and the lack of details, pushing US stocks down about 1.5 percent on uncertainty over when and how Washington would act.

Even so, congressional leaders still predicted the passage of what may turn out to be the biggest US rescue package in history—albeit with significant changes.

Despite growing concern the rescue may be delayed, financial markets in Asia and Europe got a shot in the arm on Wednesday after one of America's most-respected investors, Warren Buffett, bought a stake

CONGRESS A5

'GARGANTUAN' VOTE OF CONFIDENCE In Davao City, Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala II, chair/CEO of Ayala Corp., pours soil on the time capsule during groundbreaking rites of the 10-ha Ayala Center, a joint venture of Ayala Land and Antonio Floirendo Corp.

P5-B Ayala Center rising in Davao City

By Judy Quiros and Rizalene Araz
Inquirer Mindanao

DAVAO CITY—IT IS THE SINgle largest investment ever in the city.

The construction of the P5-billion Ayala Center on a 10-hectare property along J.P. Laurel Avenue here has started and is expected to be fully operational by 2013.

Jaime Ayala, president of Ayala Land Inc. (ALI), said it took six months of discussions to finalize a partnership deal with the Antonio Floirendo Corp. (Anflocor) for the project, known as Abreeza.

The entry of ALI here is seen as a positive indicator by the local business chamber.

P5-B AYALA A6

Palace: What humanitarian crisis?

By Christine O. Avendaño

WHAT HUMANITARIAN CRISIS? No such thing in Mindanao.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita yesterday insisted the government had resources to deal with over 580,000 people affected by the raging conflict in Central Mindanao and did not need help from international aid agencies.

Ermita stressed that there was no humanitarian crisis as a result of the patriotic operations by the military against rebellious commanders of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) accused of assaulting several towns last month.

"There is none," he told reporters. "Otherwise, we have to resort to tapping our interna-

PALACE A4

Janjalani brothers raked in millions but pa dies poor

By Julie S. Alipala
Inquirer Mindanao

ZAMBOANGA CITY—HIS SONS in the Abu Sayyaf had made billions of dollars from kidnappings, but Abdulakir Janjalani died a poor man at 79.

The Janjalani patriarch, whose sons Abdurajak, Hector and Khadaffy became notorious for their involvement in high-profile kidnappings, died from a lingering illness inside his dilapidated shanty in Tabuk village in Isabela City on Tuesday.

Abdurajak was the founder of the Abu Sayyaf. Khadaffy succeeded him.

JANJALANI A6

Too little, too late: US OKs payment for RP war vets

By Blanche S. Rivera and Riza M. Corcoba-Adkins
Correspondents

WASHINGTON—THE US House of Representatives has passed legislation authorizing a lump-sum payment for some 30,000 Filipino war veterans. But many of the beneficiaries are not rejoicing for reasons ranging from non-recognition to the exclusion of widows from coverage.

Celestino Almeda, 93, said accepting the payment without being recognized by the US government as a valiant soldier who fought alongside American troops during World War II would make him a "mercenary."

"I cannot sell my soul," Almeda said on the phone from Ve-

TOO LITTLE A6

Aid workers see anger in the hungry

By Fernando del Mundo
Chief, I-Team

GUINDULUNGAN, MAGUINdanao—As a humanitarian worker, it isn't often that Natayda Karim, 38, finds herself in a potentially explosive situation.

SPECIAL REPORT

The distressed people she has helped are generally appreciative.

But for one tense hour last week, she faced an agitated crowd of internally displaced people (IDPs)—those forced to flee their homes in the current fighting between government forces and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

They were after a stock of 259 sacks of rice intended for those who had earlier registered for a

AID WORKERS A6

Rescuers inch closer to miners

CLOSING IN A rescuer from the combined teams of small-scale miners from Benguet Corp. and Philex Mining Corp. checks out the flooded tunnel where 14 gold miners have been trapped since Tuesday. AP

By Vincent Cabreza and Elmer Kristian Dadigay
Inquirer Northern Luzon

ITOGON, BENGUET—RESCUE teams yesterday braved mud and water and inched closer to 14 miners trapped in an old mine tunnel at the height of Typhoon "Nina."

Rosalio Gozad, the government liaison for the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB), said the teams composed of small-scale miners and safety engineers of Benguet Corp. and Philex Mining Corp. entered the underground tunnel in Antamok at 7 a.m.

Gozad said the teams had apparently come close to the small

RESCUERS A6

Taking beauty into their hands

Lifestyle

By Pam Pastor
20/20 and Super Subsection editor

IN THESE HARD TIMES, more and more Filipinos are taking beauty into their own hands, leaving beautician with less income.

SPECIAL REPORT

Hair coloring is one treatment that people have been doing on their own.

"They now dye their own hair," Rychie Cruz, who runs a salon in Cainta, Rizal, says of a number of his customers.

One of his regular customers now buys a tube of hair dye and shares it with her daughter.

Hair-coloring treatments are available everywhere—from department stores and supermarkets to corner drugstores. People pick up these boxes, follow the instructions and get a fresh coat of color without having to pay anyone to do it for them.

Do-it-yourself beauty treatments aren't the only way people are cutting their beauty costs.

TAKING B1

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

EZ2 SUERTRES

FOUR DIGIT

MEGALOTTO 6/45

P4,500,000.00

RP committed to peace – GMA

By Fe B. Zamora

UNITED NATIONS—PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo assured world leaders on Tuesday her government was committed to the peace process in Mindanao and would restart peace talks with "responsible elements" of the secessionist Moro Islamic Liberation Front when the area is secure.

"There is no alternative to peace. I stand before you today to declare loud and clear that we are committed to the process of peace in Mindanao," the President said in a speech to the opening of the 63rd United Nations General Assembly.

She said the progress of the talks had been hurt by the MILF's violent members.

Ms Arroyo suspended the peace talks after rogue leaders of the MILF unleashed encroachities in General Mindanao last August, killing civilians and burning property, following the Supreme Court's scrapping of a ancestral agreement that would have created a wider autonomous Muslim region under the control of the MILF.

"We will restart the dialogue when the area is secure, our people are safe and responsible elements in the MILF regain control," she said.

But she said talks would be continued from talks with the MILF which is "inclusive dialogue with the communities" in Mindanao.

"The essence of our engagement with all armed groups shall subscribe to the UN's cornerstone principles of demobilization, disarmament and reintegration," Ms Arroyo said.

"My enormous high hopes in our inevitable dialogue as a means to building bridges reduce those barriers between communities of different cultures and enhancing," she said.

In a meeting with the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly, the President asked OIC Secretary General Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu to help in making the rival Muslim rebel factions in Mindanao to bring about "sustainable" peace in the region.

Press Secretary Jesus Dureza said the OIC has agreed to help "consolidate the Bangsamoro" and even offered to give "socio-economic assistance."

Dureza said Ihsanoglu assured Ms Arroyo that "any political settlement should not be in the context of secession or independence but within the context of sovereign integrity." With AP, Reuters and AFP

Gloria launches, 'charm offensive' for Miriam's bid

By Fe B. Zamora

UNITED NATIONS—PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo unleashed a "charm offensive" here on Tuesday to push the candidacy of Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago for a seat in the United Nations International Court of Justice.

The President held talks with six UN delegations on Tuesday as part of the campaigning for Santiago, with more countries lined up until the eve of her departure on Thursday, on the sidelines of the 63rd session of the UN General Assembly.

Asked if Ms Arroyo met a President's dozen eight week, Press Secretary Jesus Dureza replied: "My assessment is that it is very favorable."

Dureza noted that Ms Arroyo's counterparts easily "warmed up" to her.

"Usually she has President is. She's a very strong solidarity. She will not allow any opportunity to pass, that's why she's here in New York. She's working as a salesperson for the Philippines," Dureza said.

The President had scheduled talks with the heads of states of St Vincent and Grenadines, St Kitts and Nevis, Andorra, San Marino, Cape Verde, Equatorial Guinea, Slovenia, Comoros, Antigua and Barbuda, Cyprus, Senegal, Ireland and Belgium.

She will also attend an art exhibit hosted by the President of Argentina, and dinner hosted by the President of Costa Rica and the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea. She will also receive the foreign ministers of Bahrain, Hungary and Libya.

Ms Arroyo has endorsed Santiago's candidacy for a seat in the 15-member ICJ, the UN's judicial organ. She has been openly campaigning for Santiago during UN-related gatherings.

Strong solidarity

Dureza said it also helped that they heard the President speak at the opening session on Tuesday.

"You know how our President is. She's a very strong solidarity. She will not allow any opportunity to pass, that's why she's here in New York. She's working as a salesperson for the Philippines," Dureza said.

Numbers game

The election will be held in November. Santiago will need a majority of the 192 UN member states, or 97 votes, to win the ICJ seat.

Ms Arroyo has described Santiago as "independent, tough-minded and well-qualified," and someone who will "do justice to the interest of justice across the globe."

Ms Arroyo arrived here for the General Assembly meeting on Monday and returns home on Friday.

Sparks fly anew in RH bill debate

By Christian V. Esguerra

ARGUMENTS ON PROCEDURE MARRED the beginning of floor debates at the House of Representatives on a controversial reproductive health bill.

Deputy Speaker Raul del Mar, rebuking the objections of the Catholic Church, launched the opening salvo Tuesday night against House Bill 5043 that would expand the promotion of birth control methods—both natural and artificial—through government health and education programs. It also mandates sex education classes in schools.

Del Mar called the population control bill, originally authored by Albay Rep. Edcel Lagman, "totally unnecessary and deceptive."

He said it was unnecessary because government programs for reproductive health, responsible parenthood, and population development were "already in place, promoted under existing programs, both by private and public institutions."

"There's really no problem... couples are absolutely free to choose which method of family planning they wish, natural or artificial," contended Del Mar, an ally of Lagman in the ruling coalition.

He charged that "even sterilizations are openly sold as plain contraceptives without any warning whatsoever about their short- and long-term problems."

The bill was deceptive, he contended, because it was "totally packaged with a title that would gain the support of practically everybody."

"But how can anybody argue against a measure evangelically titled 'An Act Providing for a National Policy on Reproductive Health, Responsible Parenthood and Population Development.'"

Del Mar said HB 5043 should be more accurately labeled "An Act Providing for a National Policy Promoting Artificial Methods of Birth Control" or "An Act Providing for a National Policy Promoting Contraception and Sterilization."

The Catholic Church is lobbying against the use of contraceptives such as condoms to prevent unwanted pregnancies and control the spread of AIDS. The government has largely given in to pressure to promote only the Church-endorsed natural family planning method.

Lagman defended his bill, saying recognized "scientific" methods are the same as "norms," especially to unsophisticated people.

Lagman, barring far more serve campaign, said freedom of choice was limited "as long as there are myths to artificial methods."

Point of order

Del Mar's interpellations, however, were cut short when the presiding officer, Rep. Del de Guzman, stopped another representative from taking the floor.

Quezon City Rep. Aeonie Bonoan, another critic of the family planning bill, stood up to reject a manifestation but was rebuffed, causing Senior Minority Leader Rodolfo Gonzalez to take a point of order.

"The presiding officer cannot arbitrarily interrupt a member of the House," Gonzalez said, accusing De Guzman of violating Bonoan's "right and prerogative to speak."

De Guzman answered that he was trying to impose proper decorum and adjourned the session at 7:22 p.m., before Del Mar had finished his attack on Lagman's bill.

Agri halts fund release to private groups

By Amy R. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE has suspended fund releases to private beneficiaries while it investigates irregularities recently uncovered by the Commission on Audit.

"We have temporarily suspended [the releases] to make way for tighter procedures," Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap said during the Nov[illegible] Breakfast Forum yesterday.

Yap has issued a special order stopping further releases of funds to nongovernment organizations and people's organizations that have partnered with the government arm in the implementation of agriculture projects.

Yap said the suspension will be enforced until the department concludes its investigation.

"Our investigation into the matter is going to end by Friday and by Wednesday [Oct. 1] next week, we will be ready to come out with our results," Yap said.

The Inco finding committee was formed last week in response to COA findings that there were some fake signatures on the list of farmer beneficiaries of the department's P310.7-million spending program on seeds, farm inputs and fertilizers in four regions.

The COA report said at least 32 signatures on the list of farmer recipients were fake, while 130 of the 593 recipients from Central Luzon, Southern Tagalog, Central Visayas and Eastern Visayas reportedly received only a little or none at all of the farm subsidies credited in their name.

Yap said the department will file charges and prosecute anyone they find to have participated in any irregularities.

Yap also said that the agriculture department will endorse its findings to the proper investigating agencies, even if it involves the department's own employees, officials, foundations, regional field units—"everybody who needs to answer for these irregularities."

"The main purpose of this DA investigation is to identify and take appropriate action against those responsible for the COA-uncovered discrepancies and counteract the overwhelming majority of local agricultural officers and local executives who have been doing an excellent job," Yap stressed.

Army has P1.6B in unliquidated cash advances

By Christine V. Esguerra

THE PHILIPPINE ARMY STILL has to account for almost P1.6 billion in unliquidated cash advances since 2003, according to party-list representative Rafael Ortega, citing the Commission on Audit.

Ortega said he would raise the issue in the House sub-committee deliberations today on the proposed budget for 2009 of P96.5[illegible] billion for national defense.

The Army is seeking a P29.07 billion budget for next year.

Ortega, citing COA annual reports, said part of the unliquidated was spent for "payroll and travel of officials."

"This may only be the tip of the iceberg of AFP corruption," he said.

COA recommendations

Ortega said the Army has apparently ignored "significant COA recommendations that aim to correct the pattern of non-liquidation of cash advances."

He was referring to COA Circular 97-002 on the "grant, settlement, and liquidation of cash advances," and provisions of the Government Auditing Code.

"The House should consider inserting special provisions in the Army and AFP budgets, requiring them to accomplish COA recommendations," he said.

The unliquidated amounts date back in the time of Army Chief Lt. Gen. Efren Abu, who later became Armed Forces chief of staff. Under Abu, the Army accumulated P997.5 million in unliquidated cash advances, the highest in the past five years.

During the Ileto Army chief, now AFP Chief Gen. Alexander Yano, the Army had P[illegible].A million in cash advances last year that still has to be accounted for, according to the COA.

Unliquidated cash advances under Lt. Gen. Generoso Senga in 2004 amounted to P[illegible].3 million, while those under Lt. Gen. Romeo Tolentino in 2006 was P[illegible] million.

The Army also has yet to liquidate P[illegible] million in cash advances accumulated during the term of new presidential peace adviser Hermogenes Esperon in 2005.

Yano, Senga, Tolentino and Esperon all headed the Army before becoming AFP chief.

Ortega said this motherlode practice of unliquidated cash advances in the Army tend to affect the house-funded soldiers the most.

Overpaid Calga

In 2007, he said the Army failed to distribute combat clothing and individual equipment benefits worth P[illegible] million to the 5th and 7th Infantry Divisions alone.

However, the Army allegedly "overpaid" Citizens Armed Forces Geographical Unit (Calga) active auxiliaries in the 5th, 7th, and 8th ID's to the tune of P[illegible] million.

A total of P[illegible] million more is due in the 4th ID where names were either counted twice or had the same serial numbers in the list, according to Ortega.

In the proposed P29.07-billion Army budget for 2009, P[illegible].3 billion is allocated for personal services, while P4.2 billion is earmarked for maintenance and other operating expenses.

The total Army budget proposed for next year is P7.7 billion higher than the current one.

Palace blames inflation for travel budget hike

By Michael Lim Ubac

MALACAÑANG HAS AN ADDITIONAL P1 billion allocation in its proposed travel expense budget for 2009 to account for inflation and the rising cost of domestic and international trips, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita explained yesterday.

The Office of the President's P7.7 billion proposed travel budget in the 2009 budget bill being scrutinized by Congress, is 14.9 percent higher than the P6.7 billion in 2008.

"It's not unreasonably blooted if that's what people think. It is a regular increase because of many factors, such as inflation. We know that people traveling between the Visayas and Manila, and Mindanao and Manila have complained [of the cost]," Ermita said at his regular press conference.

Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya said the travel funds are meant "to serve the people, even to see the world."

"The travel budget is not meant for government officials to see the world but for them to serve the people they serve," he said in a statement.

The budget chief stressed that only 7.2 percent of the proposed travel budget for the Office has been earmarked for foreign travel.

And that budget for foreign travel was not meant for the President alone but also for the many officials under the Office said.

"We are not a fortress kingdom. And in this era of shifting global financial landscape, an insular looking, nebulous government is not in the national interest," he clarified said.

Ermita explained that the P7.7 billion travel budget for next year would cover the transportation expenses of Cabinet members, their staff and other officials—like legislators and their staff—associating with the President.

Andaya also pointed out that Congress ranks third, after Malacañang and the education department, as the biggest recipient of travel funds, with a budget allocation of P737.6 million.

"And, if the congressmen who raised the issue feel that the allocations for their travel is not enough for travel is actually more than what they need, there may room to cut. It would of course be welcome," Andaya said.

Opposition Rep. Rufus Rodriguez of Cagayan de Oro City has alleged that the increased travel budget of Malacañang could be "seen by the early campaign of administration candidates."

Andaya said the biggest recipient of local travel expenses for 2009 is the 522,890-strong Department of Education (DepEd), with a proposed outlay of P1.00 billion.

This is to allow DepEd to send teachers for training, and DepEd officials to monitor a public school system with 18.6 million students in it next year.

Andaya said some 236,000 teachers and 14,000 supervisors will attend seminars next year designed to improve their skills, English and Science teaching skills

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Too little, too late: US OKs pay

Front page A1

gress. "If I accept the payment, [I] will not have any moral dignity anymore as a veteran of the US government. It's like we're mercenaries."

Taking only 13 minutes to vote 391-25, the Democrat-led House passed on Tuesday the Filipino Veterans Equity Act of 2008, the first bill seeking monetary compensation for World War II vets to ever make it past the chamber's committee on veterans affairs in a plenary vote.

House Resolution No. 6697 authorizes a one-time payment of $15,000 (P680,000)—only to Filipino veterans living in the United States, and $9,000 (around P414,000) only to those living elsewhere.

Sponsored by longtime veterans supporter Rep. Bob Filner (California), the measure authorizes the appropriation of $198 million as compensation fund.

Recognition, compensation

Last week, Filner told the Inquirer that HR 6697 was "a step forward" for justice for Filipino veterans.

But Delfin Lorenzana, a retired major general and former chair of the Philippine Embassy's defense attaché center in Washington, told the Inquirer: "The veterans want the Philippine government to act."

According to a statement released after a meeting held last week by veterans groups hosted by Rep. Roman Bitz, the chair of the veterans affairs committee of the Philippine House of Representatives, the Philippine approved the HR because "it shows their recognition for their service."

Recognition and compensation are the two basic demands of the veterans' claim, with the former as "coming ahead," Lorenzana said, adding that this had been communicated to Filner by Philippine Ambassador Willy Gaa.

Rescission Act

In July 1941, when the Japanese started its occupation in the Pacific, then US President Franklin D. Roosevelt called Filipino men to active military service with the promise that they would enjoy the same rights and privileges as US troops.

But only five months after the Philippines' liberation from the Japanese army, the US Congress passed the 1946 Rescission Act stating that Filipino veterans were not in active service and were therefore not entitled to the rights and privileges of a US veteran.

Filipino veterans have been fighting for these rights and privileges for decades, and HR 6697 is the closest they ever got to Republican acquiescence.

"This means a lot to our veterans, to this long victory for us," Lorenzana said after HR 6697 was passed on Tuesday.

"It's very significant because it signifies that both Democrats and Republicans agree from the monetary compensation to our Filipino veterans ... The principle that [Republican legislators] had in voting to redo—giving money to Filipino veterans—the idea that they have realized in voting, 've been snubbed by this,' he said.

Quit claim, etc.

But Alarailo, a naturalized veteran, has another reason for doubting HR 6697.

The bill requires those who accept the lump-sum payment to sign a quit claim to protect the US government from future economic claims by Filipino vets.

"Even if it becomes law, I will not accept the lump-sum payment. If I do, the government will [supplement] Social Security, food stamps, etc. will be stopped. Only when it is reinstated that the $15,000 has run out will the income be restored," he said.

(Accordingly to Lorenzana, however, the monthly SSI being received by Filipino veterans in the United States will not be affected because it is an old-age pension given to all American citizens, and has nothing to do with military service.)

Alarailo also said earlier: "If this bill passes, I will stop wearing the medals I was awarded because I will not be worthy of them ... if we will just be paid."

He was referring to the five medals he received for service as a 22-year-old US national who was drafted in 1941 into the Philippine Commonwealth Army by the US Armed Forces of the Far East led by Supreme Commander Gen. Douglas MacArthur.

Vets' widows excluded

Another condition in HR 6697 is the exclusion of veterans' widows from the right to compensation.

"It's still intentional, but it's a losing proposition because it didn't receive the veterans' military service and it puts US-based veterans at a financially disadvantaged position," said Eric Lachica, executive director of the American Coalition for Filipino Veterans, which has been soliciting for equity for years.

"The widows are not included, and that's another problem. Most of the veterans will be gone by the time this is implemented, and then widows will not be covered," Lachica said.

But a veterans support group, the National Alliance for Filipino Veterans Equity, said the passage of HR 6697 was a good hallmark position for the veterans' group. Also favored is Senate Bill No. 1315 had through.

"I'm happy that Congress is moving on the Filipino veterans issue. We have raised our concerns about this bill, but despite the fact that everything else is trickling toward, with the Senate meltdown, our champions are still shepherding this issue [to Congress]. That's the positive thing that has happened," said the group's campaign coordinator, Ben de Guzman.

The Associated Press quoted De Guzman as saying that roughly two-thirds of the 18,000 veterans are living in the Philippines.

Landmark measure

HR 6697 was passed a day after the House approved its version of the Assistance Enhancement Act of 2008, which the US Senate approved over wholesale in April to give monetary compensation to Filipino veterans and recognize their service in the US military during World War II.

But the House's version of SB 1315 removed the entire provision on Filipino veterans' benefits. If the measure fails to reach the Senate's own version, which grants US-based Filipino veterans $9000 a month in pension, veterans outside the United States $329 if they are married and $300 if not, and other one-time benefits.

Sen. Daniel Inouye, a war veteran from Hawaii, sponsored the bill that passed the Senate with the provision intact.

The US Senate and House are expected to meet in a conference committee to reconcile the two versions before Congress adjourns on Sept. 26.

HR 6697's fate, however, still has an encouraged bill in the Senate, and might not get out in the next three days because it lacks the support—and the time together is—in the Senate.

'Long shot'

"This [HR 6697] is still a long shot," Lorenzana said, adding that SB 1315 had a better chance of being passed in the 110th Congress, with the reconciliation of the Senate and House versions.

"In the Senate version, what the Filipino veterans are seeking, like burial, health care and other benefits, can still be put back," he said.

Bipartisan maneuver

In a report to the Department of Foreign Affairs in Manila, Ambassador Gaa said: "It is our hope that these deficiencies and concerns will be remedied. I consider this progress. While the legislative process can and rarely remains concerns being addressed, we can give a far more rigorous push for legislative measures that will truly benefit our veterans."

Alarailo is meeting with senators about the veterans, said his spokesperson, Jenn Rocke Ita Jobe.

"We are more on give [the veterans] the recognition they deserve while they're still alive," Rocke Ita Jobe said. With reports from Cynthia D. Balana in Manila, AP

OFWs urged to reach kin

Front page A1

cyberspace sites bridge not only the distances but also the generation gap.

A nongovernment organization that assists overseas Filipino workers is expanding its support-training program for OFWs by introducing them to the pleasures of blogging and social networking on the Internet.

Since the young members of their families are usually into Friendster and Facebook, it would be very useful for them to learn about these tools so the OFWs could connect with their loved ones better," said Antonio Dyde, president of the Blas F. Ople Policy Center.

The center was set up in honor of the late "Kabayan," Antonio's father, who died several months before the first batch of OFWs he championed left the country to work abroad.

Dyde said the center would provide cyberspace training to OFWs and their families in Metro Manila, Cebu, Davao and Singapore, three of the 10 countries where most OFWs are deployed.

In a recent interview with the Inquirer, Ople said the new project would be carried out through Tulay, a special training program on information technology that the center had been implementing recently, with the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) and Microsoft Philippines.

Communication problem

"One of the main problems encountered by OFWs is the lack of communication between them and their families (back home)," Ople's Director Alfred Palmiano noted.

Microsoft Philippines last week broadly turned over P25 million in cash and P1.3 million worth of software for the center's expanded Tulay program.

There are around 8.7 million Filipino workers overseas as of December 2007, according to estimates from the Commission on Filipinos Overseas.

Most OFWs are in the United States (2.6 million) and in the Middle East (2.2 million), with over a million of them in South Korea alone.

Door-to-door survey

In 2007, a door-to-door survey conducted by Pulse Asia in Metro Manila, Cebu, Davao and Singapore showed that 12.6 percent of OFW families communicated with their relatives abroad via the Internet.

Of this number, 69 percent owned the Yahoo Messenger (YM) program, while 35.3 percent had Internet access in their homes. E-mail (72.6 percent) was the most used Internet feature among them, followed by instant messaging (45.1 percent), the survey also found.

Ople also said the foundation would construct 10 more community technology learning centers (CTLCs) in the Philippines, particularly in the cities of Baguio, Tacloban, Calamba, Bacoor, Naga, Iligan, Davao, San Fernando, Bacolod and Cabanatuan. Each facility will also be operated in Metro Manila this year. With a report from Riza Policarpio, Inquirer Research

Position of Commodity Trade

Position of Cities of Charm

Position of Investment Cooperation

Position of Agricultural Applicable Technology

Concurrent events: 14 high-level forums/seminars

Content & Registration

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, September 25, 2008
25th Week in Ordinary Time
1st Reading: Ezr 1:1-6
Gospel: Lk 8:16-18

Ezra lived based of all that Jesus was doing and did not know what to think. He prayed, "This is Jesus, raised from the dead." Others believed that Elijah or one of the ancient prophets had come back to life. As He moved, he said, "I had to be beheaded, when I am the One whom Herod has made wonders?" Another was unsure to say that.

Commentary

Herod's wife Herodias was also there with the words of Jesus, as the Church gives us this day. He was the Herod who had John the Baptist killed. He also feared Jesus and was anxious to see Him.

But as he listened, words were also troubling with His words. He may not be the person he was used to, nothing else but a sincere belief that he is who he says he is. He is the One to whom we complain all of our hope.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2008

Rise in Pinoy drug 'mules' alarms Sotto

By Christian V. Esguerra

DANGEROUS DRUGS BOARD CHAIR Vicente Sotto III yesterday raised the alarm over the proliferation of Filipino "drug mules," following the arrest of another Filipina in China the other night.

In a press conference at the House of Representatives, he said the 35-year-old woman was arrested while allegedly trying to smuggle an undisclosed volume of heroin at the Shanghai airport.

Sotto said he was not in Hurry to identify the suspect, who was facing possible life imprisonment or death.

Just last Sept. 15, a 25-year-old man was also arrested in the same airport for allegedly attempting to smuggle into China 1.1 kilos of heroin kept in his hand-carry luggage, he said.

In both instances, he said the suspects boarded Cebu Pacific flight number 5J670 from Manila.

"We already have a problem with the importation of illegal drugs in the Philippines," he told reporters. "Now, we're exporting them."

Sotto said the woman arrested Thursday night concealed the contraband in five pairs of shoes in her carry-on luggage. He said authorities were still trying to determine the video of the seized heroin.

"We are warning our people against accepting offers to carry illegal drugs in exchange for money," he said. "It's not worth it."

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₱1,388	₱1,188	Manila to Bacolod, Boracay (Caticlan), Cebu, Dumaguete, Iloilo, Kalibo, Puerto Princesa, Tacloban or Tagbilaran (also to Boracay (Caticlan) or Butuan)
₱1,548	₱1,348	Manila to Iloilo or Zamboanga (also to Zamboanga)
₱1,988	₱1,788	Manila to Puerto Princesa (also to Clark or Puerto Princesa)
₱2,388	₱2,188	Manila to Butuan, Cagayan de Oro or Davao
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P5-B Ayala Center rising in Davao City

From page A1

"It's a welcome development. It will bring many livelihood and business opportunities for Dabawenyos. It will complete Davao's claims as the Philippines' third major city and queen city of Mindanao," said Rosemarie Marfori, president of the Davao City Chamber of Commerce and Industry Inc.

Ayala said the city's stable peace and order situation and the positive performance of retail sales pushed the group to finalize the plan overseas, which he called "a gigantic project."

Davao City is only 60 hours from Cagayan de Oro, the site of a series of bus bombings, the latest one on Sept. 1, which killed six people and injured 30.

Based on the Ateneo last chart, ALI will invest 57 percent of the total development cost while Ayalaland will contribute 43 percent.

The mall itself will occupy 63,000 square meters while a business process outsourcing (BPO) center will cover 18,000 square meters.

During a press conference at the Shell Pavilion here on Tuesday, Ayala said that the first phase of the mall's construction will be completed by 2008 but the BPO component can already operate by 2007.

"The project's total cost is estimated at P5 billion to P5 billion," he said.

Corporate social responsibility

Ayala vowed the company would fulfill its corporate social responsibilities.

He reported his answer on the establishment of the commission in the back of the property, saying the company would provide land access in the area.

Ayala said facilities would be open to indoor visitors for contact activities of the communities in other multi-functions.

Alain Christian Ibitas, sales director, said that the project would employ at least 11,000 people from the construction phase until full operation.

"We are optimistic that the market will grow given the multiplier effect, which the BPO center intends to create when it fully operates," Ayala said.

Officials of both companies said aside from jobs to be offered by tenants, businesses that would be put up near the mall could also generate local employment.

Residential, commercial

At least three hectares of the entire property will be sold for residential or commercial purposes.

"Both companies will also step up marketing promotions to lure both local and international investors to locate in the area," Ayala said.

The early local and foreign companies have started inquiring about the possibility of leasing in Abreeza, according to Marivic Altamirano, senior vice president and group head of Ayala Malls.

Good mix of companies

"The queries are indicators that the city is more than ready to host new hotels, shops, and stores that have not yet located here," Altamirano said.

She said the interest from this "good mix" of companies that offer higher-end and quality products was very encouraging since the marketing strategies for the project was still being developed.

On concerns that traffic would worsen in the area, Emilio Bombom, ALI senior vice president, said the company would construct a loading and unloading bay for passengers so that the main road would not be congested and other native routes would be opened.

Palace: What humanitarian crisis? No such thing in Mindanao

From page A1

tional consortiums to be able to support our efforts."

The situation in Mindanao is "not that bad," he said, dismissing warnings by aid agencies that flooding during the current monsoon season and an anticipated escalation of violence at the end of the fasting month of Ramadan could result in a potential humanitarian disaster.

Estrada said the conflict had neither affected or displaced 112,317 families or 520,695 persons in 214 barangays in 48 municipalities and two cities in nine provinces in Mindanao.

Experience since 1970

He said that the situation had eased, pointing out that the number of evacuation centers had gone down to 181 from 223.

It also helped that the government through the National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC) had been dealing with problems of displacements from conflicts in Mindanao since 1970, Estrada said.

"We have all the reasons to be able to eradicate properly if we are in bad fix or when we are not in a bad fix," he said.

But Bayanan opposition solon raised evacuation centers in Datu Piang in Maguindanao last week said the makeshift camps there were in appalling conditions, without sanitation or potable water, and that pregnant mothers...were 400 of them in the municipality alone...gave birth without medical help in the open field that got flooded every time it rained.

Children were malnourished and the camps were rife with diseases, including diarrhea, measles and dengue fever, according to local aid workers.

Gordon's appeal

Sen. Richard Gordon, who also is chair of the Philippine National Red Cross, has urged the government to comply with the minimum standards of humanitarian assistance in Mindanao.

Gordon stressed that the government was attending to the needs of the internally displaced persons, and with the help of nongovernment organizations and even the United Nations system in the Philippines, had spent P60 million already for them.

Reading from a prepared report, Gordon said the government and its local units had distributed P74.5 million in assistance while NGOs and the UN system handed out P16.74 million worth of relief supplies.

"We are still capable of providing the needs of IDPs," he said. "We are not crying out for help as if in panic."

The budget allotments of government agencies like the Department of Social Welfare and Development continue to support the needs of the people in the evacuation centers, he said.

International organizations or donor countries who offer to give the country assistance were "welcome" to do so, Romulo said.

Aid workers see anger in the hungry

From page A1

recently's rations of 25 kilos allotted each family of five, but had to go back home and restand the scheduled distribution.

Newly arrived evacuees said they, too, were hungry and were entitled to the assistance provided by the Model Food Program (WFP).

Men armed with pistols and M-16 automatic guns showed up and joined in the heated debate.

To settle the issue, Nantpila proposed sharing the supply with the unregistered people, reminding them that they were in the midst of the holy Muslim fasting month of Ramadan.

"The essence of Ramadan is sharing and giving," she said.

Thrilled, the crowd agreed to her counsel.

Food is sensitive issue

"Food is a sensitive issue to this situation, it is a matter of survival," she later told the reporters. "But for as long as people are willing to listen and talk, no problem is so difficult that it cannot be resolved."

Nantpila is the Mindanao operations coordinator of the Community and Family Services International (CFSI, WFP's local partner in the Philippines. It distributes assistance provided by the US food agency for people caught in the Mindanao quagmire.

The WFP has provided aid to some 400,000 people forced out of their homes when violence flared in the area last month after the Supreme Court put the brakes on a Malacañan-brokered deal on an expanded Bangsamoro homeland.

Typhoon, fighting, flooding

Angered by the delay, some MILF commanders went on a rampage, pumping a million pesos worth of gasoline in a van to personally ask the end of Ramadan in a region that its fate was stretched by the devastating Typhoon "Frank" and is currently melting from flooding caused by monsoon rains.

Some of the displaced that Nantpila's group is assisting have been hit by the triple whammy; some of them have been forced to evacuate several times in the last three months.

Nantpila is acutely aware of the plight of the agrarian, fishing experienced being one herself many times. She recalled spending a month in a school turned into an evacuation center when she was 6 years old. Her family had then left Barangay Andavit, Datu Piang, Maguindanao, at the height of the separatist rebellion.

Homeless, penniless

In 1991, she came to Manila to begin a new life. She started tech education at the Muslim quarter on Quezon Boulevard district in Quezon City. Two weeks later, the area that was supposedly purchased for the Moro by then first lady Imelda Marcos using money provided by the Libyan government was reduced to smoldering ash in a fatal dispute with the Iglesia ni Cristo.

Homeless and penniless, Nantpila joined the fight against the eviction and stayed with the holdouts at the Mosque in the area. She later participated in the campaign supported by human rights groups to secure the five-hectare spread.

That started her work as a community organizer and social worker.

When a peace agreement was signed in 1996 with the Moro National Liberation Front, Nantpila decided to go back to Mindanao to help in the rebuilding of the war-torn region. After earning a degree in social work, she joined CFSI, which was then heavily engaged in relief work in the South.

Met a walk in the park

Nantpila has found that humanitarian work isn't exactly a walk in the park.

Aid workers and volunteers operating in hostile zones could find themselves in the middle of a fire fight, despite best efforts in one is that they are not of harm's way. Often, they are called to negotiate their way out of an inconvenient situation.

Two weeks ago, aid workers were briefly held and questioned by the military in an area where they were in hand our supplies under a previous arrangement with security officers. Military operations were conducted there on the scheduled aid distribution day and the group was detained.

In another incident, armed men hijacked 10 sacks of rice from a relief truck.

The aid workers cannot but refuse to the people they serve.

On the way to an IDP accommodation last week, a CFSI team discussed how to overcome and try and motivate the displaced to put some order in the chaotic camp conditions and make themselves useful in the process.

Motivating to take control

"We have to motivate them to do something to take back control of their lives," said CFSI's Philippine director Vladimir Hernandez, JR.

Overall, Nantpila said she liked what she was doing. "There's a feeling of well-satisfaction," she said.

In May last year, she went to New York to receive an award from the Commission for Refugee Women and Children for her work to ease the plight of the displaced in Mindanao.

The award honors women who, rather than leaving after acquiring skills that would lead them to greener pastures overseas, stay in their home country to try and make a difference.

Despite the turmoil in Mindanao, Nantpila remains optimistic. "My current effort is how large," she said.

SHARING AND GIVING Maryjo Katin, operations coordinator of the Community and Family Services International, who distributes aid provided by the UN World Food Program looms. Old hunger is a life-and-death issue among the displaced people.

FATHER TO FATHER Dr. ABU SAYYAF FOUNDER Abubakar Janjalani died in his hands—a poor farmer. In this photo, then Basilan Governor Gerard Abillo, Gen. Alberto Braganza confabulate with Janjalani and his wife Wina over the reported death of their son Khaddafy on Dec. 21, 2004.

Janjalani brothers . . .

From page A1

evaded him at its border. He vow to serving a life in Bicutan for kidnapping.

"He died poor," Dr. Mazer Ballaldin, a dentist at the Lantitan District Hospital, said in Filipino.

Ballaldin, a neighbor, said the Janjalanis were prominent in Basilan because they owned land and other property.

Abubakar always maintained a low profile but managed to send all his children to the Catholic-run Claret School in Basilan.

The family later sold their assets, "even their ancestral property" here in Tabuk, to the owner of the Josh and Jill Integrated School, he said.

Old and ailing

Senior Supt. Asiddi Hassanan, Basilan police director, said Abubakar Janjalani "was already very old and ailing."

The purported hajji buried near the tomb of his son Khaddafy before sunset on the same day in accordance with Muslim rites, Hassanan said.

Even when his sons were asking millions of dollars from kidnapping, the elder Janjalani lived a simple life and had not partaken of the loot.

Abubakar was always aware about his sons' involvement in criminal activities, but he believed they were fighting for a legitimate cause. He told the Inquirer once that he hopes the army were enough to end.

But in one incident, Abubakar worked for the release of some 70 people kidnapped by the Abu Sayyaf. He told a local negotiator to relay a request to his sons and that was to free the captives.

Poor as mice

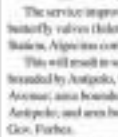
"We are so poor so mice," Abubakar's wife, Wina Ibnalubo Janjalani, said in 2006.

At one point, her husband even asked for help from the government so he could get treatment for asthma and arthritis.

One of the officials who responded was former Southern Command chief Lt. Gen. Alberto Braganza. He personally handed the medicines to Abubakar on Dec. 20, 2006, while reports about the death of Khaddafy had circulated like wildfire.

A checkup by the medical team headed by Maj. Roberto Galapitan discovered that Abubakar was suffering from respiratory tract infection and rheumatoid arthritis.

MAYNILAD SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT IN MANILA



MAYNILAD Water is upgrading its pipe network in Manila as part of its continuous effort to improve service, resulting in a temporary water supply interruption in some areas starting from 8 p.m. on Saturday, September 27, 2008, until 4 p.m., Sunday, September 28, 2008.

The service improvement project involves the replacement of two 750-mm butterfly valves (Inlet and Outlet Valve Reservoir) inside Algeciras Pumping Station, Algeciras corner Espana, Sampaloc, Manila.

This will result in water service interruption in Sampaloc, particularly the area bounded by Antipolo, Dimasalang, Gov. Forbes, Dapitan, Maybunga and Rizal Avenue; area bounded by Bhumgarten, Aurora Blvd., Macoda, Vanessa and Antipolo; and area bounded by Dimasalang, M. Dela Fuente, P. Margal and Gov. Forbes.

Maynilad is advising residents in these areas to store water good for the duration of the water service interruption. They may also call Maynilad Water Hotline 1626.

Maynilad Water Hotline 1626

MAYNILAD WATER SERVICES, INC.

Today's Babae ang Serbisyo sa Pilipino!

Congress crawling with contractors, claims solon

By Norman Bordadora

CONGRESS HAS BECOME LIKE A marketplace with customers approaching lawmakers offering the release of millions of pesos worth of road users' tax-funded projects and for commissions from project cost, an opposition lawmaker has said.

Gagguan de Oro Rep. Rufus Rodriguez raised the issue during the Department of Public Works and Highways' presentation of its P120-billion budget for 2009.

He's waiting for further explanation from the Road Board in subcommittee budget hearings for the alleged irregular disbursement of the road tax funds that have reached more than P47 billion since 2001.

"The best pastured by these contractors approaching me asking if they could facilitate the release of road users' tax funds for projects in my district offering 20 percent (of the project cost for me) and 30 to 40 percent (for) some," Rodriguez said.

"What will happen to the project?" he added referring to the questionable list of the road maintenance and safety projects with more than half of the appropriation going to lot commissions for lawmakers and Road Board officials.

Public Works

The Road Board, chaired by the DPWH secretary, is mandated by law to disburse the motor vehicle users' charge collected whenever members register their vehicles. The funds are meant for road maintenance and paving up road safety devices.

Violators during the DPWH budget hearing, adjourned hearing about Public Works Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane Jr.'s commission and his name being dropped.

"I learned my name being dragged without basis," Ebdane said.

Rodriguez questioned what he called the discretionary and inequitable release of funds by the Road Board to congressional districts and DPWH regional offices.

For instance, he said one province in Central Luzon received more than P200 million in road users' tax-funded projects in 2007. He said Cagayan de Oro City during the same period got only P15 million.

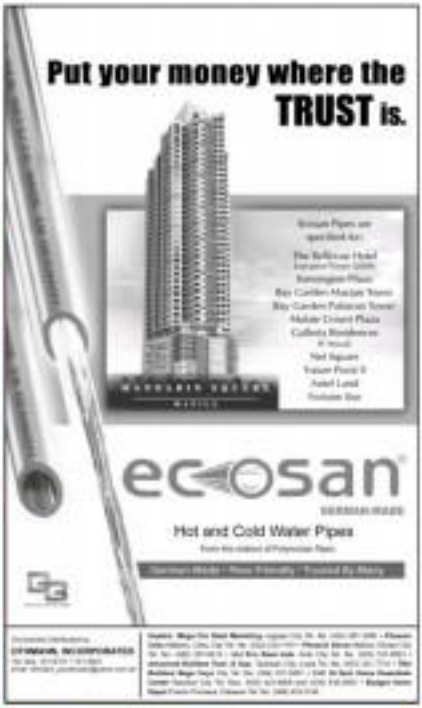
J. R. Torres; 47

EDGE. JESUS RAFAEL C. TORRES, EDU yesterday at the Manila Doctors Hospital. He was 47.

He is survived by his wife Annie; children Patricia, Carlo, Miguel, and Gabe; siblings Moses and Jim, Regie and Mildred, Pete Nez and Melo, and Rachel.

His remains lie at Arlington Memorial Chapel C. Hayuelos Ave., Pasig City.

Interment will be on Sept. 26, at 3 p.m. at the Pasig Catholic Cemetery.



Taking beauty into their own hands

From page A1

Chano, a bank employee, used to indulge in expensive treatments in nail salons. "I'd spend around P1,000 on my hands and feet. That does not include the tip. I used to visit my favorite nail specialist a month," she says.

Now, she just goes to her neighborhood salon for manicures and pedicures.

"I only pay P150 when I go there. I don't get the same kind of pampering, but at least my nails are still clean and pretty," Chano says.

Own nail polish

Nikki, a college student, used to get weekly manicures. Now, she only goes to the salon once a month. "I have my own nail polish at home so when my nails get chipped, I just apply it fresh (on) myself," she says.

Chris, an investor, has become a fan of home manicures. On the other hand we go to cafés and spas. "Now, rather I buy beauty treatments from supermarkets and use them myself or I call home service beauticians. They're just as efficient. If you're very careful, beauty can be really expensive. But you don't have to spend too much to look good," she says.

Daily record

Before Chris and other women resorted to taking beauty into their own hands, Cruz meticulously kept daily shop records.

Cruz developed this system for years. Every single thing he would jot down the name of each customer who came and what treatments they chose and how much they pay to make sure he knows just how much money his salon makes.

But he has started to neglect his logbook. "There's no need to make a list because our same clique are only get two customers," Cruz says. This is a big change, considering that his salon used to have 10 customers a day. He says the numbers started to decline in June of this year.

Basic and affordable

Those who do go to the salon now frequently choose services that are more basic and affordable since the pricey treatments that used to be popular.

Before, they often had relaxed or retax. Today it's just haircut," Cruz says. Hair salon rates P800 at his salon, while rebonding treatment is P1,500.

People still avoid themselves of manicures and pedicures regularly. Cruz says, "People can't resist a manicure," he said. They can bear skipping a hair dye treatment but not suffering from a painful fingers or toe."

Beautician in Arabia

Cruz, who first put up a salon in the Philippines in the 1980s, left the country for 15 years to work as a beautician in Saudi Arabia. He returned to the country and reopened his salon in 2005.

The decrease in the number of customers isn't the only thing affecting Cruz's business. The rising costs of beauty supplies pose a problem as well. "It's surprising, the cost of an item I bought just some by P5," he says.

Other beauticians dropping at the same supply store have been complaining, too.

Despite this, Cruz refuses to increase his prices. With the rising costs of everyday living, he understands his customers' predicament.

"Most of the customers are mothers. They think that instead of going to a salon, they'll just use the money for their kids," he says.

Cruz thinks he'll still today. He earnings are still enough to cover the expenses although he says that his profit isn't as big as it used to be. "I still rule somehow."

He hopes things will get better—if no sell, the "low" months have started and he says that people always want to look good during the holidays.

Salon owners aren't the only ones affected by the surging inflation. Home service beauticians are also feeling the brunt.

Rose Libid is a walking, one-woman salon. She does everything—manicures, pedicures, haircuts, hair treatments, facials, even massages.

Libid has been visiting homes around the V. Luna and Project 8 area in Quezon City for home service customers for four years now.

Asked if she noticed any change in demand for her services, her reply was unquotable. "Oh yes. Before they avail themselves of my services every week. Now, it's just twice a month."

Her prices are pretty low compared with those of most salons—she charges P500 for manicure-pedicure sessions—but even that amount has become a burden on low customers.

Full treatment

Libid used to have customers who would ask her to give them the full treatment (manicure, pedicure, haircut, massage and facial) weekly but that's no longer the case.

"They had all the services before. Now, they say 'I'll have just this one because of limited budget," she says.

Customers who used to call her to their homes weekly now invite her one only once a month. "Some of them would wait for their children working abroad to send money. Then they'll call me to go over to their place," Libid says.

Libid's economic fate also made a dent in her earnings. To have and go back to the house, she spends P60 on two bicycle rides and two jeepney rides.

If she gave one customer a manicure and pedicure that day, cove had her earnings would be spent on public transportation.

HOME SERVICE A cut as homey as it used to be for Elvie Libid, a new-woman wielding beauty tales. —NOEL CELIS

NO LOGBOOK Ryclan Cruz does not use the paint recording the names of customers who came to his salon in Cubao, Nissi Pram. If regular customers, he only averages two these days. —NOEL CELIS

DOH, BFAD refuse to issue ban list of Chinese food

From page A1

No item has been confirmed to be linked to the contaminated milk products so far, said Dr. Socorro Ilyang, director of the National Epidemiology Center.

"The tracing back is aimed to establish the degree of illness in children and to find out if the illness was related to the consumption of milk formula," Ilyang said yesterday in a phone interview.

Ilyang said the health department would issue children before two years old, who have been diagnosed with kidney problems in government hospitals and investigate their possible exposure to milk formula if they were breastfed or if they were given infant formula.

The health department has adopted the advisory of the BFAD in banning the importation and sale of milk and milk products from China pending the results of laboratory tests to determine if products sold in the country have been tainted with the industrial chemical melamine.

Import licenses revoked

The health department also temporarily revoked all licenses of importers of milk products from China.

Four children have died while 54,000 others have fallen ill in China after drinking milk laced with melamine, which is used for fertilizers and plastics.

Suppliers allegedly added the chemical to watered-down milk because its high nitrogen content masks lack of protein content.

The country does not import infant formula from China, according to BFAD. What is common found on Tuesday were bottled liquid milk from China's Yashua in the Chinese, Paralaque and Quezon and in towns in Cavite and Laguna.

"The Health department have been the importation, distribution, sale or offer for sale of all infant formula and other milk products containing base China. No person, company or whatever entity shall buy, purchase, or otherwise acquire said products for whatever manner," Health Secretary Francisco Duque III said in the memorandum order released yesterday.

"All existing import licenses are hereby deemed revoked and/or otherwise cancelled," the memorandum added, taking its cue from a BFAD advisory issued Tuesday.

No list

Responding to questions from the bayanan, officials of the two agencies pointed at one another on who should issue the list.

In a simple inquiry with the BFAD hotline, the operator just said: "No not buy any milk and milk products that are made from China."

Any food with milk ingredient

Question on which specific brands should be avoided in the meantime, the hotline operator just said: "Any milk and milk products from China."

Asked if milk-based food products like biscuits and chocolates are included in the ban, the operator said: "Any food products with milk as main ingredient."

She confirmed that she had already received numerous calls for comments.

BFAD field inspectors, tasked with bringing samples of China-made milk and milk products for testing, are not provided with a list of specific brands to watch out for.

"We are instructed to monitor all milk and milk products from China in the markets. We are also looking out for unregistered milk products," BFAD Collaborators supervisor Josephine Padilla told the bayanan. Collaborators refer to Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon provinces.

Virginia Francia Lubay, officer in charge of BFAD policy planning and advocacy said the bayanan would not be releasing any list.

"We do not want to release any list yet. We do not want to penalize only those registered products because we are also concerned with unregistered products," Lubay said.

Text messages

Told that there have been text messages circulating naming several brands as among those being banned, BFAD Director Leticia Gutierrez said the list did not come from the bureau.

But she said her office also received those text messages and its inspectors were already checking on the products.

Her advice to consumers who receive those text messages: "It is better to be on the safe side. They can just avoid those products in the meantime, especially since those are not staple food."

The brands in the text messages circulating include Nestlé chocolates.

"Whatever brand, as long as it (milk and milk products) comes from China, then it is included in the ban," Gutierrez said.

Health Undersecretary Alex Padilla said the list should come from the BFAD, since the department order in the memorandum was directed at appropriate agencies.

Pulled out

Milk products from China have been pulled out of supermarket shelves as early as last week even as the government has yet to determine which particular items were dangerous to consumers.

The Philippine Association of Supermarkets, Inc. (PAGI) and Philippine Amalgamated Supermarkets Accessories (Puregro) ordered their members to stop selling the products when reports came out about melamine contamination.

Food merchants such as Makati Supermarket, GrabMart, Santos and Robinsons while members of Puregro include neighborhood-type operations.

"The BFAD directive that we received on Tuesday now only serves as a reminder for those who have not complied with our voluntary recall," said Rebecca L. Pitu, Puregro treasurer-general.

Pitu said the group would hold a national meeting on Friday to reiterate the BFAD order to 64 members across the nation.

He said the sale of milk products from China formed an insignificant amount of their businesses' turnover.

Yili, Mengniu sold briskly

Puregro president Steven T. Cua said Chinese brands like Yili and Mengniu were selling briskly even months or so ago.

"Sweet sales will swell, but I'm not sure which of our more than 160 members do carry them," Cua said. "Anyway I am told the supplies of these brands are in inventories.

Milk products made by Santa Anna have reported to be the cause of kidney problems among children in Gansu province and the cities of Beijing and Shanghai.

All our field offices are working with the health department to ensure that contaminated milk products from China will not be sold to consumers," Trade Secretary Peter G. Favila said.

In Muntinlupa City, officials urged residents to look out for any milk products from China that might have made their way to public markets, supermarkets and even sari-sari stores in the city.

Mayor Aldrin Cortez Jr. said the public may call the following telephone numbers if they see milk products from China being sold to the city: 862-0660/862-2459/862-0963. With a report from Ed Sap

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Republic of the Philippines

Arbitral for Supply & Delivery of Nutrient Mixtures for Roaring of Dual Professional Office No. V (Lot# 2 Installation)

1. The Department of Education (DOE) through the Regional Office No. V (Lot# 2 Installation) intends to apply the sum of Three Million Four Hundred Sixty Five Thousand Nine Hundred Seventy Eight Pesos (3,465,978.00 Php) being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for Supply and Delivery of Nutrient Mixtures for the Roaring of Dual Professional Office No. V (Lot# 2 Installation).

2. The Supply of Nutrient Mixtures for the Roaring of Dual Professional Office No. V (Lot# 2 Installation) is defined in the Terms of Reference (TOR) and Technical Specifications (TS).

3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pre-qualification criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of RA 9184 (Government Procurement Reform Act). Bidding is restricted to Filipino citizens/organizations and to citizens/organizations of countries the laws or regulations of which grant reciprocal rights or privileges to Filipino citizens/organizations, as provided for in the IRR of RA 9184.

4. Prospective bidders may obtain further information from the Department of Education (DOE) and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested bidders from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of Three Thousand Pesos (Php 3,000.00). The source of funds is the General Appropriations Act. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective bidder or his authorized representative. Period of delivery will be on September 20, 2010. Bidders should have completed within the last five (5) years from the date of submission and receipt of bids a contract similar to the Project. The description of an eligible contract is one that is similar to the Supply and Delivery of Nutrient Mixtures for the Roaring of Dual Professional Office No. V (Lot# 2 Installation).

6. Bids and eligibility documents will be received by the address below on or before 10:00 a.m. on October 1, 2010. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security in the form of cash, Certified Check, Cashier's Check or Bid Security in the amount of Php 34,659.78 (Bank Guarantee in the amount of Php 104,000.00 or Surety Bond in the amount of Php 69,319.57) and other forms as specified.

7. Bid opening shall be on October 1, 2010, 10:00 a.m. at the Bidder's Conference Room (DepED-NRO, Legazpi City). Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidder's representatives who choose to attend at the address below.

8. The Regional NRO reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject at any time prior to the contract award, without incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

Regional NRO
DepED Bldg. D. Rd.
Legazpi City
Tel. No. (052) 480-8648
Fax No. (052) 820-6449

(Sgd.) ANNIELINE D. TOP
BAC Chairman

Rescuers inch closer to trapped miners

From page A1

mediamet editors brothers Illario and Joseph Amparo were believed to be holed up.

Floodwaters swamped the underground tunnel of Barged Coal between 4 a.m. and 5 a.m. on Tuesday. That night, the Office of Civil Defense said three were 14, not 11, miners trapped there.

The tunnel and its numerous branches were flooded when a landslide at the other side of the mountain diverted creek waters into the depths.

According to the work log book, the trapped miners are Robert Bonny of Itogon; Gilbert Sanson, Rudy Bulag Jr. and Gerry Mongoldia of Bagio; Garry Gano and Joel Bolgo of Quirino; and the Amparo brothers.

The others are Vincent Hinampas of Quirino and five others identified only as Jayson, Rudy, Jojo, Jean and Marvin.

Dampened hopes

Mud and water have plugged some of the tunnel branches, dampening hopes that the trapped miners would be rescued, members of the Gold Field Intensity Community Miners Association Inc. told the reporters at noon on Tuesday.

Former Gold Field president Fred Jacinto said the equipment had the best chance of survival because, as indicated in a logbook entry, they had retreated into a branch of the tunnel that had air pockets.

MGB engineer George Bayoneng said miners had sent for a compressor to pump oxygen into the tunnel to elevate to 19 or 20 percent the estimated 17 percent of available oxygen now.

He said the floodwaters had eddied a lot, but the miners that filled up the underground chamber only were still up there.

Steve Bellone, Bayoneng said, the rescue workers rescued hopeful because they had found survivors of earlier accidents who somehow trapped for somewhat a week.

'But water!'

Eleven of the miners are trapped in one tunnel pocket, while another team and close to the entrance—Glenn Jones, featured on their log on site, Bayoneng said.

Only the Amparoans are trapped in a tunnel section with a good air supply, he said.

"It would be easier for us to dig through rocks had there been a cave-in. But water?" Jacinto told Andrew Sampson, the freelance media who had tried to organize a search party on Tuesday.

Jacinto said the miners needed water-filling equipment to create a still flooded section of the tunnel.

Alaminos Mayor Howard Braganza had offered to send diving equipment for the rescue teams, but was still considering the offer.

Benguet Corp. said that along with Philex, it was actively participating in the rescue of the trapped miners.

It said it had provided "logistical support" such as food and equipment to the public and private groups involved in the rescue operations.

Under lease?

Jacinto said the 66-year-old tunnel had been leased by Benguet to small-scale miners.

He said the unregistered group entered the tunnel under mediamet who blocked up evening.

But Environment Secretary Lito Atienza told reporters in Manila that the miners "illegally entered the abandoned mine."

"The miners are not employees of the mining company. In fact, I the mining company] also sometimes their area illegal because they are not under [the tunnel] without its knowledge," Atienza said, adding that the company should not be blamed for the incident.

He added that the abandoned tunnel remained "an attractive place" for small-scale miners.

Atienza also said the Environment and Management Bureau was coordinating the rescue operations of the two mining companies.

"There's no development yet. The rescue operations being done [by Benguet] with the Philex rescuers have not yet had any positive result," Atienza said.

"Right now, the best rescue equipment and personnel are the best rescue teams of the mining companies," he said. PCIJ reports from PJ Bagunu and Jhoy Rosete in Manila; Fraud Climaco, Inquirer Northern Luzon

Congress resists Bush bailout plan

Newspaper 1

in Wall Street's most powerful firm, Goldman Sachs. (See story in Business, Page B1.)

Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway initiated markets with a $5-billion deal to buy about 9 percent of Goldman, helping US stocks. US stock futures jumped more than 1 percent, pointing to a stronger start on Wall Street later on Wednesday.

"Buffett's legendary status as a value investor gives the bulls reason for optimism, as some will see his move as a sign to call the bottom of the recent declines," said Chris Hussain, senior sales manager at ODK Securities.

Sad and embarrassing

During the hours of grueling hearings on Sunday, Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson told lawmakers that the $700-billion bailout plan was "sad" and "embarrassing," but was needed to stave off a deep recession that could cost millions of jobs.

While Paulson spoke, the US Federal Reserve was forced to inject another $2 billion into the troubled financial system to help mutual funds scrambling to raise cash to meet heavy withdrawals by spooked customers.

Without the bailout plan, Paulson and Federal Reserve Chair Ben Bernanke declared in a dire scenario for senators: Neither businesses nor consumers would be able to borrow money, and the world's largest economy would plunge to a virtual halt.

The legislation that the Bush administration is promoting would allow the government to buy hundreds of billions of dollars in mortgages and other risky assets held by troubled banks and financial institutions, letting them debit off their books should bolster those companies' balance sheets, making them more inclined to lend and easing one of the biggest choke points in the credit crisis. If the plan works, it should help lift a major weight off the nation's economy that is already sputtering.

Resistance from lawmakers

Democratic Sen. Chris Dodd, chair of the banking committee, and Republican Sen. Richard Shelby, the ranking member of the committee, said significant changes were needed before the rescue plan could be passed. "We have got to look at some alternatives," Shelby said.

Dodd later spoke disparagingly of the administration's proposal. "What they have sent us is not acceptable," he told reporters.

Democratic Rep. Barney Frank, chair of the US House financial services committee, warned the plan might not pass until Monday adding that the Democratic-controlled Congress needed limits on compensation for executives of firms off-loading bad assets.

It's all or nothing

Sen. Charles Schumer, a New York Democrat associated with Wall Street's interests, pressed Paulson on if he would take the money in installments, starting with $150 billion.

Paulson, a former Goldman boss reportedly worth about $700 million, replied bluntly: "We need the full authority."

"What this is about is market confidence," he said. "It's a red story, but the American taxpayer is already on the hook."

Congress and the Bush administration are under growing pressure to act following a rising tide of US home foreclosures and loan defaults, and the failure of 22 investment banks as well as the world's largest insurance company.

The financial crisis has become the No. 1 issue leading up to the Nov. 4 presidential election, and many lawmakers seeking reelection to Congress want to appear vigilant.

FBI probe

The congressional debate over the proposed bailout is sure to heat up further as news that the federal Bureau of Investigation is probing allegations of fraud by 26 Wall Street firms including several investment giants whose collapse sent world markets reeling.

CNN said the FBI had set its sights on investment titan Lehman Brothers, mortgage behemoths Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac and giant insurer American International Group (AIG) in order to determine whether company executives had any responsibility for the institutions' financial woes.

Limits on pay packages

A hot-button issue, if not the main bone of contention, of the fresh plan involved the setting of limits on pay packages for executives of companies helped by the money.

Goldman's chief executive Lloyd Blankfein took $54 million last year. Wall Street's late ex-executives, Jimmy Cayne, Richard Fuld, Stan O'Neal and Dick Grasso, got approved their sign-on reserve or bonus to cushion them from the crisis.

Merrill Lynch boss John Thain was paid $15 million to join the company last year. He could get another $15 million when Merrill's sale to Bank of America goes through—a sale prompted by Merrill's troubles.

The world's largest insurer AIG paid boss Martin Sullivan $14 million last year. The company was rescued a week ago with an $80-billion federal loan.

Cost to every taxpayer: $2,100

The proposed bailout, potentially the United States' biggest ever, could cost every American man, woman and child $2,300.

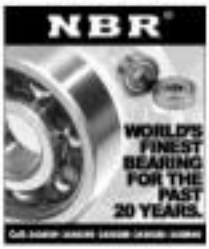
Besides the world's richest country, $700 billion would be a huge budget drain. Since 2003, the Iraq war has cost almost $500 billion, or a little more than $1,000 billion annually.

Paulson and Bernanke earlier said the plan might cost less since the government was able to resell toxic mortgage securities.

Paulson said the government would buy the securities in a reverse auction in which the price of buyer and seller are reversed to ensure the lowest price is paid.

Some experts, however, voiced doubts about Paulson and Bernanke could end America's worst crisis of confidence since the 1930s Great Depression.

"They have been wrong about nearly everything since this crisis began years ago," said Henry Roberts, director of research at New York investment firm Factor IQ. "Why should we trust their judgment on the largest bailout in American history?"



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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

PNOC Exploration Corporation (PNOC EC), through its Corporate Budget of 2008, intends to apply the hereunder amount being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the **Supply, Delivery and Installation of Booster Recovery (BR) Screw, DR Storage, and DR Storage and Rack Expansion** (the "Project").

Lot No.	Description	Qty	Bidding Fee (Php)	Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) (Php)	Bid Submission/ Opening Time
1	Disaster Recovery (DR) Server	1	2,000.00	2,000,000.00	October 14, 2008 10:00 AM
2	Disaster Recovery (DR) Storage	1	2,000.00	2,000,000.00	October 23, 2008 1:30 PM
3	Disaster Recovery (DR) Storage and Rack Expansion	1	2,000.00	2,000,000.00	October 31, 2008 3:00 PM

PNOC EC now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the above Projects. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at bid opening.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act", and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty (60%) percent interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only bids from bidders who passed the eligibility check will be opened. The bidder with the lowest calculated bid shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine the responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the Project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.

A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by interested bidders from PNOC EC's Procurement Section (c/o Mr. Leoncio C. Bulonan) starting **September 25, 2008** upon payment of a non-refundable fee specified above.

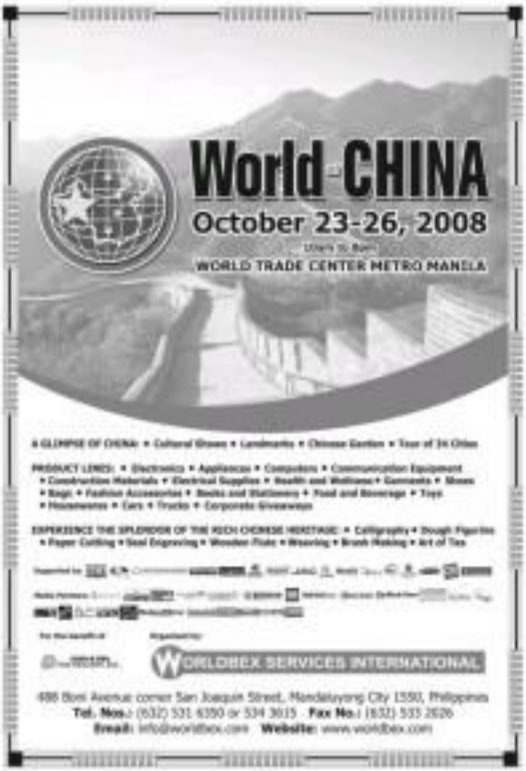
For purpose of clarifying certain issues, a Pre-bid Conference shall be held on **October 8, 2008** at 10:00 a.m. at PNOC EC Head Office, Bldg. 1, Energy Center, Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City.

Bids and eligibility requirements must be submitted in three (3) sets each to PNOC EC's Bids and Awards Committee, Bldg. 1, Energy Center, Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City not later than the date and time specified above. The bids, including the eligibility requirements, shall be publicly opened immediately thereafter. **Late bids shall not be accepted.**

PNOC EC reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidders or bidders.

This publication is also posted in our **website at www.pnoc-ec.com.ph** and in the **DBM website at www.procurementservice.net**.

The Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee



ISSN 0116-2042 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER Vol. 25 No. 292

OPINION

Elitism

EDITORIAL

WOULD ANYONE BE CRAZY ENOUGH TO BUY A P55-ticket for P1,500? Apparently yes—and there are many of them, if the crowd that packed the Araneta Coliseum to the rafters last Sunday was any indication. That P1,500 price was what scalpers set for a general admission ticket to the first game of the championship series between the Ateneo de Manila University and the De La Salle University, the two glamour clubs not only of the UAAP but of Philippine basketball today.

If that amount looks mind-boggling, consider this: The online auction for two patron tickets priced at P125 each saw somebody bidding P50,300.

And yet those people who paid such astronomical sums could have gotten a bargain. In the next UAAP basketball season, a fan may have to spend anywhere from P60,000 to P70,000 for the privilege of watching an Ateneo-La Salle game—and that doesn't even guarantee him a ticket per. All it does is assure him a place in the long queues of ticket buyers, both in the schools and at the Araneta box office.

If these figures look suspiciously like the cost of matriculation for one semester (or trimester) in Ateneo or La Salle, that is because they are. Enrolling in these schools now seems to be the only way one can have a chance to buy a ticket to their games, unless one is an alumnus or one is willing to pay through the nose. And that is the end result of a misguided policy adopted by the Araneta Center limiting the sale of tickets only to those who can produce IDs or authorization letters from either of the two schools.

On Monday, even before the box office opened, Araneta Center guards told people who had lined up as early as the night before that unless they had Ateneo or La Salle IDs, they won't get any tickets for the second game of the championship series. And relieved some people were turned away after they failed to produce their previous ID. In earlier games, an announcement on the Araneta Center's LCD screens said the same thing: no ID or authorization letter from a UAAP member school, no ticket.

Araneta Center officials deny they have such a discriminatory policy. What they have put in place, they say, are measures to bar scalpers out of business by denying them tickets. That, one official said, they have turned away some people who looked "roughneck" or who came in slippers.

In other words, if you don't look half-way decent or respectable, you can't be just a basketball fan, you can only be a scalper. From there it is only a short step before one arrives at the conclusion that unless somebody is from Ateneo or La Salle, he doesn't line up for tickets to enjoy the game but to earn a windfall at the black market.

Well, we have some big news for the bright boys at Araneta Center: those tickets sold online as well as those lower box tickets offered at P5,000 each and upwards didn't come from those who lined up at the box office. The people who made a killing were not the usual suspects. Araneta Center officials are looking at the wrong people and in the wrong places. And if UAAP officials want to help stamp out scalping, they need not look far. All they have to do is look at the people around them.

In the meantime, Araneta Center officials should not make the crackdown on scalping an excuse for discriminating against ordinary basketball fans. It smacks of old-fashioned elitism, which should have no place in a competition that seeks to foster goodwill and friendship among member schools and showcase teamwork more than individual talent. If they open the doors to the general public when less popular teams play, they should keep it open when Ateneo goes against La Salle. The storied hard-court rivalry between the two schools has grown bigger than the UAAP. It has become a national event that not only basketball lovers look forward to and watch. League officials and the Araneta Center should not turn it into a private party for the perfumed set.

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Tomorrow's bribe

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

CHEATING MARRS WILL SURELY SPOIL AWAY FROM budget insertions, rice imports, fertilizers or even somewhat envelopes from politicians. To days ahead, graft will instead evolve around water.

"Growing populations will compete for shrinking water resources," delegates from 100 nations at the World Water Week meeting in Stockholm agreed. "Corruption will likely become an increasingly serious problem."

Four out of 10 people today live in basins running and from water shortfalls. Burmese and Malaysians have five times more water than Filipinos. And four of ten more rivers water from the same well others. In 1940, one did.

"You cannot wash filthy water," the study group's says. Over 50 percent of groundwater here is contaminated, notes Asian Development Bank. Only half of 457 lakes and rivers meet water standards.

Slower pulls up pair taps for water servers snowballs between 10 and 20 percent worldwide, estimates Water Integrity Network. It'll cash as $40 billion to the cost of achieving a Millennium Development Goal: to halve, by 2015, the number of those who lack clean water.

Graft varies in size. It may just be mere nuisance. Whatever call bribes "lagay," Mexican cops suggest a "refresco" (a drink), and "fukabread" in the Middle Eastern handle. North African use "un petit cadeau" (a little gift). But there's nothing petifying about the loot.

Transparency International's list of the "World's 10 Most Corrupt Officials" claims Joseph Estrada (a.k.a. Jose Velarde) pocketed 10 million. Corruption downed up 10 or 15 percent of all Indonesian economic relief, Aceh's non-Government Monitoring claims.

Water companies is usually different. There's no substitute for water. Shortages of irreplaceable commodities make political moves faster than, say a bribe for a judicial decision. Those who straddle water concessions can name their price.

When taps run dry farmers fail. Water shortages and pollution cut a deadlier snatch. Worldwide, the Philippines has the second largest number of children who die from diarrhea. Limited waters. The first is China. The number of Filipino kids hit by diarrhea is almost double those of Vietnamese, Malaysians or Burmese.

In Tarsa Tarsa, 80 out of every 100 residents lack safe water. Compare that to three in Bataan and 30 in Cagayan. It is whenever Olympia cannot drink water without courting disease or death," author Randall Packer writes.

Warning signs are up. Barons grapples with competing bulletproof and corruption demands, on the Pasigan-Tarsagan River. Bataleros farm that piped water from regions beyond their border stomata in Metro Manila. The brand new P1.2 billion irrigation network in Iron Miguel, fueled to water shorts—and must be "refurbished." Who got the "kaklasan"?

At an Asia Pacific roundtable in Cebu, former President Fidel Ramos predicted: "In three years, Cebu will confront a big water problem." Thereafter's water from Bohol.

Nun this and Provincial Managing Director's Davidson (DO) speaks? "Local water supply problem is water," Mr. Nilsen said Gilbanian then. "You have several options. Decide in 30 days. Decide now."

"Well, we have news for Mr. Ramos," a line star commentary said. "The problem is already here."

Metro Cebu today pumps double what its aquifers recharge. Thus, a third have been irreversibly damaged by salt intrusion. Wells are turning brackish. Water tables have slumped. All the rivers are biologically dead. Cebu's adobe water agency has leaky taps in easily four out of 10 households. It cannot provide 24-hour service.

So why does Cebu jet out? Shipyards and new bakers also double demands in other cities like Manila. Leakages from supply. The well drilling frenzy causes land subsidence too. Shut inspections and eight of 10 buy banks will be patched by 2025, Japan's International Cooperation Agency forecasts endless.

"We have no water problem," scoffs Cebu Mayor Tomas Osmeña. Some, elections bill" city council otherwise known as "a haven of enmity." This is a leadership in denial. But delusion doesn't alter reality.

Tales of a heroic struggle in the Cherokee points project the 250 former South Pioneer. Investors built our uncertain miles, lack of roads, power—and water. Cebu does not have the "Saudi option": to exchange oil for water. With oil prices blowing $70 in one day this week, energy-intensive desalination has become prohibitive.

The mayor's friends use small water firms. They'd drill yet more wells into crumbling aquifers. That guarantees an earlier collapse of a resource that provides over 90 percent of Cebu's water. The mayor blocked a proposal to tap Cebu's northern water, which was developed by World Bank, Ayala and major firms. City Hall didn't bother with conservation to get "more bang for the drop." Cebu Daily News snapped: "We have water policy blank holes."

Accept the 20-kilometer Bohol pipeline Mr. Ramos dismissed off. "There is hope in Cebu to watch out for," Bohol Governor confirmed. Bohol must halt exporting a valuable resource that Cebuanos wasted. Tender.

"We are not on a straight line path to the future," State of the World 2006 notes. "Choices must be made in the ways water is secured or conserved, polluted or protected ... valued for all its uses or simply exploited for a few."

Wise policies open the use of innovative economics, pricing policies, investment decisions, say. But policy pardons guarantees that tomorrow's wells will pay bulkhead for mafia users—also available.

(E-mail: jumbomercado@gmail.com)

Reading—and more

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I'M GLAD THE INQUIRER IS PUBLISHING ITS campaign to encourage reading with study tips. Last week, it took the form of a Read-Along session in Marikina, which also launched the Zoom Club of Marikina's literacy program. Several people, including singer Ai-Ai delas Alas-and writers Vim Nadera, Rhy Nieto Pupa, and Dyan Arala took turns reading children's stories. (Ami were in the case of the writers—by the pupils of Kaptan Moy Elementary School.

I am especially glad about this task of encouraging reading among the kids, reading to them in the hope that by lining up their imaginations with the stories, they are going to look at that strange contraption called a book not as a source of punishment but as a treasure trove of wonder. I am just so glad that some of the readers read the stories they wrote for the Adarna Publications. Adarna, as a generation that grew up on it knows well (the '70s and '80s), publishes illustrated children's books. Hype to the value of illustrated material in a while.

One nagging mistake here however, which by Dyan's own reality had dawned on kidding the worst to hold out? Or, an? Has a valiant effort that at least can only help stem the tide? The waves or tide being the growing illiteracy brought on by competing media.

There is one epic, or epochal, difference between my time and the time my kids grew up in. In my growing years, which was the '50s and '60s, there weren't any TV. In the province, there weren't that many movies at all either. There were few movie houses that changed movies once a week, sometimes longer. If you were the curious kind, you had nothing to live up your imagination with—except books. Which were to be found only in libraries. There were even fewer bookstores than movie houses, which sold paperback not for a song. I lived my imagination by scouring the school library and the public one. From kindergarten much intoxicated ones. But from which I owned then the very equivalent of all Rizal's save, every book holding a promise of romance.

My second kid in particular was born to a book itself. Of course improving taste in movies among the kids is easier said than done, but I figure it's easier than getting them to read to begin with. The schools can help in this.

Just as well, I don't know why we can't revive the comics. I personally do not mind that we are overwhelmed by pictures. If that's what it takes to get people to read, then by all means let's resort to it. That is the value of the Adarna books) to begin with, they are illustrated children's books. The Japanese have their "manga," which are komiks for adults, and which are tremendously popular. We used to have a thriving komiks industry, one that turned out dozens of publications each week. I don't know why that can't be revived. It should have a huge audience today with the success of the superhero movies particularly. The komiks of old were of course in Tagalog, but who says Bisaya can't have komiks in English?

The Internet itself presupposes reading. Of course it's nothing compared to reading a book—and many blogs are almost anti-literary in their lowbrow/anna language—but better than not reading at all. There's a lot of value in that respect, which is the development of digital books, or e-books. Many kids today find reading books an alien experience but they do not find reading things in the PC that at all. Maybe it's just a question of bringing the books to the PC. Maybe it's just a question of getting the kids to read the books on their own, on the models they will honor. If Mohammad won't go to the mountain, then bring the mountain to Mohammad.

Amazon has already developed the Kindle, a portable little gadget that stores hundreds of books, which you can order at Amazon.com from there. Amazon holds a hundred thousand titles. The only reason I don't have it yet is that it is still unavailable outside the United States because of the usual barriers on book importation in other countries. But it's the way to the future, I suppose. It would have an impact on encouraging reading.

The point is, why make an enemy of a potential ally?

RP: been there, done that

THE DEBATE RAGES IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES over House Bill 5043 (the Reproductive Health Bill or RHB). Or, (for those over) today should be found in the representations of RHB's proponents and opponents. Both sides have their say and for 8th in various facets of our national life. I wish to add my voice to those against HB.

The main arguments of RHB's proponents are: the Philippine population has become so large that it affects the delivery of basic services and economic programs; and women's reproductive health will be safeguarded by helping them limit the size of their family through the use of contraceptives. But the fact is, basic services are not being delivered largely because public funds are grossly misused unduly by the politicians who have access to them. And as has been shown by South Korea and other countries, population growth is a positive boon to self-burning with economic progress; as couples become more gainfully employed, they inevitably limit their family's size. Inversely, various studies have shown that certain contraceptives actually pose grave risks to the health of users, the health of mothers. The billions of pesos proposed for contraceptives could be used to generate economic activities without harming health and funding political causes. Above all, there's the moral issue.

* * *

Aside from the financial and economic managers of our country, there's one man who monitors the volatile international financial scene more assiduously than most. He stays up till 3 a.m. these days, checking his sources around the world. He is Gabriel Singson, the first governor of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) that emerged from the Central Bank (CB). In a recent conversation over sweet and pumpkin soup prepared by his wife Montserrat, he admitted that he monitors the stock and bond market and capital markets of the United States and Asia "every day now than before I was in the Central Bank." This is because, he said, in his over four decades in banking, he cannot recall seeing a more volatile international market than the one we have now. His preoccupation is important as he is the advisory of the Philippine business leaders here, who turn to him con-

Political Tidbits

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

stantly for advice regarding their investments, especially now as Wall Street giants are collapsing and are absorbed by other entities or taken over by the federal government.

Singson noted that last Tuesday the Dow Jones average went down by 3 points, erasing all gains from last Friday's opening surge after the $700-billion bailout plan was announced by President Bush and the federal Reserve. (As the US Congress mouthed its debate on the bailout details, stocks plunged further—400.) He pointed out that from Jan. 1, 2008 until this month, the Shanghai Stock Market index plunged by 37.3 percent, Vietnam's by 51.2 percent, Singapore's by 36.04 percent, Thailand's by 38.30 percent and the Philippines' by 39.6 percent. Because of all the bailout funds floated, the dollar has weakened but oil has again gone up to $ 120/barrel.

* * *

Asked whether the world financial market is showing signs of stabilizing, he shook his head, adding that the problem would linger a while and the solution is beyond either of the two US presidential candidates. He stressed that as a result of the world financial crisis, the surviving banks are moving "risk-averse" and are not lending out as much as before, especially to businessmen. If the financial institutions would not lend to one another, how can business operate, he asked. "It's clearly a question of loss of confidence all around," he said. The central banking thing is, BSP has heard the garrote financial crises before and "was nagaling aye sa kun is handling-nya," he added.

* * *

Singson recalled how a Filipino-Chinese businessman was abducted with P700 million in investments in the late '70s. This resulted in the collapse of a number of local finance companies, forcing the CB to buy out the bad debts. The good thing was that this episode triggered a law requiring stricter supervision over investment houses. Then there was the massive capital flight and the "negative instruction from service" following the assassination of Ninoy Aquino, that forced BPI to declare a debt moratorium on Oct. 17, 1983. Singson, then CB's senior deputy governor, recalled: "In the next 20 years of martial law, there was no financial bank abroad, except from multilaterals such as the World Bank and the IMF, forced to cover all imports by dollar allocation. CB rose its debts gross to more than P200 billion; it took more than 20 years before the new BSP was created with a fresh capital of P10 billion to sweep City old debts away."

Since then after the Asian crisis in the second half of 1997 which hit the property sector in countries like Thailand (whose bank loans from were 600-800 billion baht), Japan and Korea, Singson, still BSP governor then, recalled that BSP banks were not as hard hit, coming only about P70 billion. Also, at certain extreme individual banks, such as Global Business, many of banks to no more than 20 percent of portfolio investments and reducing the loan value from 80 percent to 70 percent.

* * *

What happened on Wall Street was that investment banks were not very well supervised by the Fed because, unlike commercial banks, they don't receive deposits, Singson opined. This despite the fact that they are the major users of the facility, after Oct. 20, 2007, Singson noted, the housing and subprime problem began, and from January 2008, no portfolio, even the more conservative ones, registered positive incomes. But Singson is confident that the system will emerge from the financial meltdown and once now there's talk of cleaning in the United States a new (not) corporation that would buy all the bad debts of ailing financial giants, to give them time to get back on their feet. Singson recalled that something similar was created here in the '80s.

Cycles

IT WAS 5 A.M., AND I WAS ALREADY HALF-AWAKE. THE wake-up bell had rung and my roommates covered their ears with their pillows to shut off the noise and tossed in their beds.

I have been hearing that wake-up bell every morning for more than three years now, but I have yet to get used to it. The sound is still irritating to me. Though it lasts for just a few seconds, the high-pitched ringing is deafening. But there are times I wish it would keep ringing so that I would remain glued to my bed.

YOUNG BLOOD

Gil A. Dalon Jr.

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the [name]something said before.—Ed.

Where the bell stopped ringing, I looked around. My roommates were still asleep. Darkly for them, they were unaware to the ringing of the bell. I had a few minutes before to start the day. I headed for the bathroom and immediately took a bath.

As the cold water splashed on my face, my mind daily consuming schedule flashed through my mind: work on the biology assignment, write two laboratory reports for Chemistry, study the quizzes in Math, Computer Science, and Physics, and prepare for the defense of my research project. Just thinking about the things I needed to accomplish that day made me feel sick. How much more doing the real thing? The thought was enough to ruin my day.

After attending the flag ceremony under the heat of the sun, I had to deal the ball rolling. I went to my classes and other things to some of them and crammed some assignments while listening to my teacher (this is my specialty: multitasking...crammingwhile listening).

I did those things again and again every day of the week. And when Friday came, well, I was grateful that I survived, even if barely.

The weekend came and everything followed in a cyclic: mailing, surfing the internet, playing computer games. Play play and play until there is no tomorrow—this is my weekend routine. But, on some occasions I try to do my homework, but most of the time I none.

That Sunday night as I try in bed, an idea hit my head like some random bell that rings in my mind. Instead I must study, learn and strive for excellence. I saw a picture of my self accepting medals and receiving congratulations from my teachers. It seemed as if my conscience was speaking to me, but then perhaps those images were hallucinations caused by the many hours I spent in front of the computer monitor. After a while those images disappeared. I finally went for my dream locked in my eyes gradually closed and I fell asleep.

Then it seem as again, the irritating wake up bell. Again I saw my roommates trying to extend their sleep, as I hurried to take a bath and start my day. I thought of the assignments I had to finish. Everything was still the same—no "inner change," no "spiritual awakening," no "awareness," just as I appreciate I needed to. Inside, deep, I wondered how I would survive the week.

It was really tiring, living stuck in a cycle of eating, going to class, studying, sleeping and consuming made me feel like I'm a machine that I wanted to follow" was the feeling I want ed to experience the unexpected—the highs and lows.

No. I am tired of this cycle. I'm tired of getting mediocre grades. I'm tired of cramming. I'm tired of playing computer games again and again and going to the mall every weekend. I'm tired of assuring my parents that everything is fine is when.

I want to be free. free from doing anything, but free from being a slave to my boring schedule, a slave to my laziness.

I am a scholar, a "scholar ng bayan," someone who ought to serve as a good example to his fellow students. The country, the taxpayers, my parents and everyone else around me sacrifice a lot so that I can get a quality education. Everyone is counting on me.

I know I am not the only student whose hobby includes cramming, sleeping during class, playing computer games and going to the mall. I know that there are very many people. My millions of students in this country who are stuck in the same cycle that rules my life. I know there are many students who go to school because they have to, or who attend classes without even understanding why they have to. I am not the only one who needs to change.

We are the next leaders of our country. Our country faces a lot of problems now, and many people hate how the government is being run by politicians today. But before we know it, it will be our turn to deal with the problems. If we do not strive hard to learn concepts and ideas as well as the right principles and values, we will run this country the same way our politicians are running it today. If we cannot be content about education or learning, if we continue to be drawn of our own personal cycles, at some time in the future we may end up like the people we criticize today for running the country. We have to start right now to survive every drastic one today.

Maybe the things I imagined that Sunday night were not just the side effects of computer gaming. And I don't intend to let those bright images remain inside my head forever.

Gil A. Dalon Jr., 15, is a 4th year high school student at Philippine Science High School Southern Mindanao Campus.

'Surgeons do not cry'

Human Face

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

"MY KNEES IS MY PRIDE," DR. JOSE "JING" Tinsay Jr. told me 22 years ago. "My fascination with surgery has been total. I have forgotten to get more bad."

Jing is a brilliant surgeon, one of the passionate doctors who filmed a cleft lip health care/surgery drive in Davao and later in the out of the Philippines. Twelve years ago, I did a feature review ("Jing Tinsay and the dream") of his book "Child of the Sun Remaining," "on his love of surgery and the [illegible] he was asked me if I was writing a book. I did. In my heart, not a one." And one is Heaven for "love to," "a more dramatic translation would be "It's love."

Earlier, I did a long story story on him for the Sunday Inquirer Magazine. I had to interview him just for that. I got to watch him perform a Caesarian operation and interview him before doctor-nurse-in-time. Those doctors were once called "doctors who refuse to say die."

Tinsay's story after "Child of the Sun Returning," I received from Jing another book titled "Surgeons Do Not Cry," a compilation of his columns given by a Mindanao news agency. Or it be accurate. "Twelve years later and the anger and bewilderment is still there," he wrote in the introduction.

I was in Davao recently but I didn't have the time to reach Jing down. I hope he gets in touch. So since I have a lot of stories crying out to be told, to Jing, let's hear them, narrate his way.

"Child of the Sun Returning" is the amazing story of the Medical Mission Group Hospitals and Health Services Cooperative Philippines (MMGHHSCP) as told by Jing who was one of its founders, "Surgeons Do Not Cry" published by the Philippine Association of Medical Missions, the official reminder of the University of the Philippines Ed. Sage of Medicine (UPCM). The book was launched in UPCM scholarship.

It would be worth mentioning that before UP-CM, Jing was a third-to-the-week, war-time intern here up the hill. And no wonder, UPCM presented itself as a new frontier, a wilderness to be conquered, and later, loved and be forever a part of his vision in life.

Published recently the book is a fitting tribute to

Human Face

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

UP which is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year. It is also a good read for everyone, and most especially for aspiring doctors and health workers with the heart of service—whether right now or in the future—serving on foreign shores. Jing's idealism might just rub off on them. And Jing has a great writing style—wry, subtle, comical, raging, tongue-in-cheek. He does not write from the clouds. He writes from ground zero.

Jing's stories are rather polemic nor platitudinous. They are everyday stories of a medical student, intern and resident at the UP Philippine General Hospital. There was a chance as far as they are in terms and so forward and not having a great time. We are also in there.

The commemorative about those experiences of yesteryears were obviously written just recently or so hindsight, as one could sense the warmth and the kindness that come with distance and the passage of the years. Time does heal and also the cruel device of a man who has poured out much.

Here is the story about the woman who yearned and lobbied her son (intern Jing had to "subject" a source), about Aling Sinang, a patient's mother who "refused to die" because she was waiting for her son to reinforce" (because there might be extra bill for her son), about blood donations or gore de sangre (a drop of blood) from medical interns, cheating at UPCM "death on the table"—those could make a TV medical series "E.R." Philippine style.

Instead of talking about what's in the book, I might as well offer some excerpts.

From "Interns": "Caregiver's worst nightmare is to have a patient on his operating table. So it was when that happens, it becomes a part of his life that

The Long View

Manuel L. Quezon III

Demolition derby

IT IS SAID THAT PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo has some word that she is quite happy with Manuel Villar Jr. remaining Senate president. Which is different from her actually spending political capital or any other capital to prevent his being toppled. Indeed, Arroyo reportedly expressed irritation at his sister-in-law being hauled to court, but his candidacy didn't take off reportedly because he didn't seek the Palace's intervention on his behalf—not that Prince Orville, or the other Bacod, is especially keen on overturning his former wife's decision to run for presidency, and he has never been shy about lobbying chief executives for their support.

The Palace likes of senators—Santiago, Gordon, Revilla, Lapid, Sotto, and quite possibly Angara, too, not to mention de facto senators Villar and newly mobilize in support of Estrella, making for a sizable administration bloc of seven votes, to weak the magic number of 13 votes, they would need to obtain the votes of NPC's Legarda and Escudero, of Lakas's Pimentel and Biazon.

This is still easy, not short, but that might be provided by Estrella voting for himself or cast by Madrigal, who has been top-running with Lacson to defeat Villar, less she'd be ridiculed for being bullbacked in her hometown.

Arroyo would probably never vote for his by Estrella's ballot, but might, out of party loyalty, not cast a positive vote for Villar by abstaining.

Villar, for his part, seems to expect the support of his party mates. Legarda and Escudero are members of Piz, as well as that of Estrella, Arroyo, Pimentel, and Pangilinan. Pimentel, if only he could vote, would probably be Estrella's for the position of Villar.

But since the Senate president has never been shy about voting for himself (writing aside the ballots that he shouldn't), this means he has a bloc of seven votes. Not enough to keep the presidency of the upper house. But even if he loses the administration bloc, he can still count on Lacson and Sotto to assert two more senators to throw any officer to an ouster him. And the most likely candidates seem to be Jinggoy Estrada, who has been a Villar ally since the latter's days as Senate president, and Juan Ponce Enrile

Also punish the 'meddlers' in the Meralco-GSIS case

IT ONLY TO SET A STERN EXAMPLE NOT wanting in practicing lawyers. The penalty of disbarment or suspension from law practice should be meted out to lawyers found guilty of trying to influence the Court of Appeals justices in Meralco-GSIS case.

It may be recalled that under the Rules of Court, among the specific duties of a member of the bar is to give candid and judicial officers the respect due them. And he should never try to influence a judge's or court's decision. In fact, a resolution issued by the Supreme Court many years ago expressly prohibits lawyers from talking to judges concerning any case that has something to do with his official functions.

The investigation uncovered the use of, as professional conduct of one lawyer in relation to the Meralco-GSIS case. The lawyer admitted having called a brother of a member of Court of Appeals division that was to decide the Meralco-GSIS case. In reaction to the lawyer's request for his studying the case, many highly respected professionals could only answer in disgust, "Tell it to the Marines!"

—ARTURO M. TOLENTINO JR.,
Hen. Salamanca cor. L. Guerra Sts.,
San Roque, Cavite City 4100

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LETTERS

Unsung heroes

THE SEPT. 7 ARTICLE "USING CHICKEN feathers to build homes" by Kenneth M. del Rosario was a wonderful story and showed that the best ideas are the simplest. Nicmalito Aida, a woodwork teacher, is all the more remarkable for having won a prize two years ago for another simple idea.

This article, along with the story "Recycling road heroes" by Ed Sy, about Nilverto Atilla and Ronnie Bulilan, an honest taxi driver and jeepney driver, showed that there are many true but unsung heroes in the great nation. God thanks be to God for their integrity!

Ingenuity, simplicity and integrity are qualities that stand out and shine like stars in the night, and these three men have them in spades!

Please, more stories along this vein. You were not for the week, no matter how grim other news roll in.

—WALTER DOMINGO, Block 18, Lot 1 B St Peter Hamtwagan, Cagayan de Oro City

QC's Central Business District: a win-win project

IN HIS SEPT. 10 COLUMN, HDR, CPCI hinted that the crafting of Executive Order 620-A was tainted with graft and corruption. He talked of "fat commissions ... by the BIR's [National Housing Authority] and QC [Quezon City] officials."

EO 620-A, which introduced amendments to EO 300, was issued in deference to the stakeholders' strong position, which was understandable because they represented the main property owners in the area covered by the EO. The EO states, among others, that any deals, structures and agreements affecting the properties should be "without prejudice to proprietary rights of the property owners." Perhaps, unobjectionable as such enactment before the fact are issues that can be properly addressed by the property owners who have the primary say in any transactions.

The QC government's Central Business District Project in the North and East Triangles was envisioned as a win-to-win under the use of a vast tract of land owned by the government, located in a very synergic part of the city which had remained undeveloped for decades and, worse, had become a most hospitable area for informal settlers. The dilemma that faced the city government was: should we simply stand by and let government remain as it is or not?

Our first step was to consult an international development institution, with one of the broadest experiences in development planning, to determine the best use of the property. The result was a World Bank study that made use of the knowledge and experiences of local and international experts. They came up with a Framework Plan of Development for a set of loads that they identified as "the source of gravity of all commercial developments in the growing area."

With World Bank's go-signal, the project has attracted not only local but also global interest. Now at this stage, the project is already a strong proposition for the stakeholders, as property values are going up with the prospect of better communities in a well-planned urban development.

Truth is stagranting neighborhood to a "without prejudice to proprietary rights" — this can only be a win-win proposition.

—ISIDRO A. GERON, secretary,
Urban Triangle Development Commission, 12/F Quezon City Hall Main Building, Elliptical Road, Quezon City

Recall move vs Panlilio a step back to 'slavery'

A BRIGHT RAY OF HOPE FLASHED ACROSS our land during the May 2007 elections. It felt like the beginning of our people's liberation from the tyranny of patronage politics. The source of this bright ray of hope were the good people of Pampanga. They silenced the cynics that good people, propelled by a dream and a will inspired by noble ideals, moral leadership and engaged citizenry, could rise and win in elections and could beat dirty money and entrenched political machinery. They proved that faith does indeed matter and that ordinary people in solidarity with each other could effect change for the better. They reminded us that aspiring for public office could still be a noble and divine calling. *Parang pulpol.*

This hope is now under threat. A campaign to recall Among Ed Panlilio, the duly elected governor of Pampanga, has been launched. The recall movement is an opportunistic and purely politically motivated exercise meant to preserve and paralyze a crusader who has given Pampanga and the rest of the country much reason to hope for change.

In pushing for Among Ed's ouster through their manipulative ways of soliciting the needed number of signatures, the recall movement's proponents are making a mockery of people's initiative and people power; they are perpetrating not just the gravest but also all those who seek meaningful change in Pampanga and elsewhere in the nation. This is why voters outside Pampanga must be heard as well. After all, we rise and fall together as a nation.

Why, we ask, are they seeking the governor's ouster? Is it because he had the courage to annul awarding P500,000,000 in excess unreasonable salaries? Is it because he continues to face a simple and modest life? Is it because he and his team have put an end to contractors' 30% or the proverbial cagayan? Is it because they have raised quality revenues?

Or is it because the success of the "Pampanga experience" highlights the utter failure of the power-bid and entrenched people and of patronage politics in bringing the country to its knees? Isn't it true that the ultimate for good governance shows clearly how many of our elected officials have an avowed selfishness for the common good?

When God's chosen people were journeying through the desert and experiencing trials, some of them complained and wanted to return to the land of slavery. This is not the way to go. Let us move on and not look back. The Promised Land is beckoning.

—FR. GILBERTO O. SIVA, executive/coordinating steward, Bilash Foundation Inc., (a faith-inspired movement for social transformation)

THE 2008 SHDA-HUDCC ANNUAL DEVELOPERS' CONVENTION & EXHIBITION
September 23-26, 2008 Manila Polo Pavilion, Cubao City

Housing Amidst Challenging Times

The Subdivision and Housing Developers Association, Inc. (SHDA) is the Philippine's largest and leading organization of subdivision and housing developers with chapters and memberships nationwide. SHDA is at the forefront in promoting and safeguarding the interest of our members through continued coordination and linkages with government agencies and allied professionals. Among the activities of SHDA are the conduct of meetings and seminars to discuss various issues affecting the housing industry and a yearly study tour in different countries as part of its continuing efforts to acquire and incorporate housing ideas and technology from throughout the region.

Since its birth, the global crisis we are currently facing - which also threatened the housing sector - produced even more profound challenges. As called to mind by the theme of the housing industry has the realities of the familiar arenas have not and try long to uphold through decent, affordable housing.

The Subdivision and Housing Developers Association, Inc. (SHDA) hosted the Annual Developers Convention on September 23 to 26, 2008 in Cubao with the theme "Housing Amidst Challenging Times," this event provides a rugged platform where developers can exchange ideas, experiences and technologies.

This conference is undertaking to be one to bolster the housing industry through the dissemination of highly relevant and timely topics such as trends and innovations in housing technologies and sustainable development, economic or local initiatives in the private sector, opportunities in the regional and local housing markets, and possible legislative amendments aimed at improving existing government programs and projects.

Inland and congratulate the SHDA for its accomplishments in the housing industry. We can assure you of our continued support and cooperation as we unanimously vote to organize and strengthen the chapter and for the development of the industry.

MARIA [illegible]
President
Republic of the Philippines

[illegible]
Vice President
Republic of the Philippines

THE 2008 SHDA-HUDCC ANNUAL DEVELOPERS' CONVENTION & EXHIBITION
September 23-26, 2008 Manila Polo Pavilion, Cubao City

Housing Amidst Challenging Times

Across the NATION

More troops sent to Central Mindanao

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—MORE SOLDIERS WERE deployed in Central Mindanao as firefight raged anew in Maguindanao the day the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) rejected a proposal by Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno to suspend punitive actions against some of its commanders.

The military has sent another Army battalion to the region, particularly to the provinces of Sarangani and South Cotabato, to beef up its fortifications there.

Sarangani Gov. Miguel Dominguez had earlier asked the military to provide more troops to prevent MILF rebels, under Ameril Umbra Kato from attacking "vulnerable" areas again.

On Aug. 16, two civilians were killed when Kato's forces stormed Mlamin town in Sarangani.

Senior Supt. Danny Reyes, information chief of the Central Mindanao police, said police had monitored MILF movements in Sultan Kudarat that could be part of rebel preparation to bring the hostilities outside of Maguindanao and North Cotabato, where fighting has escalated.

Mohagher Iqbal, MILF chief negotiator, denied any MILF movement. He said the government could be trying to create a scenario after the front refused to surrender Kato, Abdullah Macapaar, alias Commander Bravo, and Alexis Solaiman Pangalian.

The MILF leaders were linked to the series of violence in North Cotabato, Maguindanao, Sarangani and Lanao del Sur, in which more than 60 civilians have died since August. The military has since been hunting them down.

Puno had earlier said it was not necessary for the MILF to surrender Kato, Macapaar and Pangalian for the offensives to be halted. He said he could recommend the suspension of all operations to Malacañang if the MILF Central Committee put its chief leaders in custody.

"It's a precondition. We cannot act on that. [It is] as if he is dictating to us," Iqbal told the Inquirer by phone.

He maintained that as far as the MILF was concerned, the three had not committed wrongdoing and that they were only provided what government forces entered their areas.

"If indeed our commanders did wrong, what we will do to them will be internal to us," he said.

Two rebels were killed while two soldiers were wounded during clashes in Datu Saudi, Ampatuan on Tuesday.

Pfc. Ramel Untiad and Pfc. Ronald Bonita, both of the 64th Infantry Battalion, suffered decapitated wounds in the body when rebels under Kato fired rockets and mortars, Maj. Arnulfo Rico, spokesperson of the military's Eastern Mindanao Command, said.

Col. Julieto Andin, spokesperson of the 6th Infantry Division, said the military had to use helicopter gunships to drive away the rebels from Barangay Dapiawan.

MILF information chief Khabir Musa said the military fired at least 200 rounds of artillery on MILF rebels, who were then maneuvering. Agnès Z. Zenin, Edwin O. Fernandez, Jeoffrey Maitem, with a report from Ninth R. Rimalinao, Inquirer Mindanao

GOVERNMENT security forces arrive at a remote village of Alkosar town in North Cotabato. Armed Forces Chief of Staff General Mauricio Tuna said there has been no change in orders to go against these "rogue" Moro rebel commanders. (JOHN PAUL RAMOS/INQUIRER.NET)

'I'm no liar,' says Panlilio

CITY OF LAOI, PANGASINAN—Pangasinan Gov. Eddie Panlilio called as "totally baseless and unsupported" the claim of Rep. Willie Villarama's statement calling him a "liar."

"Rep. Willie should have checked first his data before making such pronouncement. I never said Malasiqui is behind the overall score. What I said was Malasiqui is perceived to be behind this move," Panlilio said in a text message on Wednesday.

When Villarama spoke on stage before some 2,000 people who gathered in a rally on Monday, he said: "It is clear there is another score they can say I am behind. Maybe just that I'm tired thing. Why did they have to drag the President's name in this? Isn't the matter very, very obvious? What is the issue here? President Arroyo is not the issue here. The issue here is the lying done by the one running the capitol."

Villarama lamented in the crowd Panlilio's supposed reply to his friend after a program at the Bulwagang Katipunan.

"[Panlilio] was asked by my friend: Governor, Willie Villarama was among your original campaigners. Un ka May 14, 2007 [election]. Why is it now that you have become his enemy? You know what was the governor's answer? He said, 'Sigaw, sino ba ang [Willie], it was an order from the top,'" he said.

Panlilio said Villarama has to be reminded that lying money the duty-exempt harvesters what you know and what you say."

"Hence the word 'lying' here is grossly out of place," the governor said.

Panlilio said he was not angry at Villarama's remark. "At isang police unit iyon. Those police get personal sa mission [." he said. Jimmy Ortiz, Inquirer Central Luzon

Legazpi, Naga join drive for smoke warning

LEGAZPI CITY—PEARING A native Cohiba but, a new skinny and douched Dunhill that collectively resembles the stalwart villain he used to be in old Filipino movies.

For several decades, Dita Bedard conserves with action superstars like Joseph Estrada and Fernando Poe Jr.

But eventually his real-life battle was his bodily demonizing: health due to smoking.

In 2000, Dita suffered a stroke and underwent major brain surgery. For his future recovery, his wife Nena Soler-Dita transformed him in her hometown in Daraga, Albay, where the actor soon lives a healthy lifestyle.

"I am thankful to have the vibe from all them, he could take a walk whenever he wanted to. But above all, he has quit smoking," Soler-Dita said.

The couple were present in the launching of Project Death Clock, a campaign pushing for the passing of a law requiring graphic warnings on cigarette packs to cut down tens of thousands of deaths and billions of pesos in public health spending caused by smoking-related diseases.

"I had for ten quit smoking, he could now be playing cards with 100 in the afterlife," Soler-Dita said. Ben Nicol, referring laughs from the audience.

Legazpi and Naga unveiled their own "death clocks" on Wednesday, a campaign which accumulates the number of tobacco-related deaths each day the Graphic Health Bill is not passed in the House of Representatives.

The eBay "death clock" on Monday-October "silhouet stand GLOBO (Unconvicted) death since 1994 started." The figures will change at 1,000 new deaths are added weekly.

Dr. Marivic Limpin of the Framework Convention on Alliance Philippines said 13 Filipinos were dying every hour due to tobacco use.

She said the tobacco industry only brought P92 billion worth of revenues but the government spent P276 billion in medical services addressing four of the most common smoking-related diseases.

Limpin said around 90 entrepreneurs were now supporting the bill, which was authored by Northern Samar Rep. Paul Daza. The bill aims to accurately depict "nakikita debilitating diseases caused by tobacco smoking through strong warnings messages in pictures."

Limpin said a study by the Philippine College of Chest Physicians revealed that 96 percent of smokers admitted that picture-based warnings against smoking would "most likely make them quit compared with text warnings. Of the 1,207 survey respondents, 45 percent said text health warnings had no effect or were not enough to make people quit smoking.

But what killed it so long for the bill to be passed is that it is still being deliberated upon and strongly opposed by the tobacco farms.

"Tobacco companies are using tactics to kill the bill by influencing members of the House of Representatives," Limpin said.

"Many tobacco farmers are declining to cultivate corps because of the low-profitability [as low as P30 per kilo," she said. "What will benefit tobacco farmers most is to impose increased taxation on tobacco products. We are supporting bill that will give them that."

Igor Gonzales, 48, of Cagayan, a smoker for 31 years, said graphic warnings might help former smoking-related deaths but it might not be enough to make him quit.

"What we need are support systems, like our friends, workmates and families. When we are able to witness basic manifestations, like the family, it might be that other when and regret will have become collector's items." Gonzales said. Epifanio Aguilar, Inquirer Southern Luzon

Laguna cop files ₱1.3-M damage case vs 3 fellow cops

By Allison W. Lopez

FOR CALLING HIM "GIBAK" convicted arms and humiliation," a Laguna police officer implicated in the school fire in Tayuan, Batangas, during the 2007 elections filed a P1.3 million damage suit at the Manila Regional Trial Court against three fellow cops who allegedly libel Elito Obinque against him.

Insp. Roberto Marinda of the Regional Intelligence Division at Camp Vicente Lim in Canlubang accused Supt. Elmin Fernandez and Chief Insp. Ernesto Villena, members of the Criminal Intelligence Division Group, Upolice Service and Road Safety Office of the Batangas Police Provincial Office of distributing flying "groundless and malicious" criminal and administrative cases against him in connection with the arson at Pringhing-mas Elementary School.

The predawn fire on May 13 killed teacher Nelfa Dumog and poll watcher Lerlie Ramos just after they had completed canvassing the votes cast the day before. A dozen others were hurt.

In the grave misconduct and oppression case he filed before the Office of the Ombudsman, Fernandez claimed that Marinda and other members of the Regional Special Operations Group (RSOG) served as a "strike force" for then incumbent mayor Hernando Villena, who lost in the elections.

Fernandez said the RSOG was not mandated to perform any election-related activity in Tayuan or tasked to perform any investigation of the fire incident. Witness Cesar Simon also reportedly identified Marinda as a police lineup as one of the suspects in the school torching.

The Ombudsman, however, dismissed Fernandez's complaint for lack of evidence.

"The mere presence of some RSOG personnel at the scene of the crime does not give proof that the entire unit or its members were involved therein," said graft investigation and prosecution officer Elsa Salazar in his decision.

The RSOG, it added, was a legitimate police unit that may be utilized for other operations such as augmenting police forces during the election period. The Ombudsman also said it would be "too hasty" to conclude that the RSOG was used as a "strike force" for Villena since there were only two RSOG personnel—Marinda and SPO2 William Bebe—during and after the incident.

"In the absence of any direct proof that may link the presence of respondents Bebe and Marinda to Tayuan, Batangas, the rest of the respondents, the 'strike force' theory of the complainant [Fernandez] must fail," said the Ombudsman.

Doubts were also cast on minor Reynaldo's identification of Marinda as a police lineup when SPO1 Lloyd Orena, who leads the area's church, said Marinda was present the whole time as Reynaldo described the suspect for him.

"If Reynaldo had Marinda in mind, the taking of the sketch would not have been necessary anymore because Reynaldo could have conveniently identified Marinda as the perpetrator at the time," Tuliao said.

Terrorist tag to worsen conflict—MILF

By Mike Ocon

PUTTING THE TERRORIST TAG on the renegade commanders of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) will only complicate the resolution of the conflict in Central Mindanao, according to a Senate official.

Iqbal said that is not a good move ... It will make matters worse," Ghadsali Jaafar, the MILF vice chair for political affairs, said reporters in Camp Aguinaldo by phone.

The government on Sunday asked the MILF to hand over Marinda to declare as terrorists Ameril Umbra Kato, Abdullah Macapaar, alias Bravo, Alexis Solaiman Pangalian, and nine others MILF leaders for leading last month's rampage in Central Mindanao that left hundreds of civilians dead and thousands of others displaced from their homes.

Mohagher Iqbal, the MILF's chief negotiator in the peace panel, expressed optimism that the UN will exercise fairness in deciding on the government's request.

Optimism

"We cannot stop them [foreign governments] from doing that. I hope the United Nations will give the MILF a chance to present its case," Iqbal said reporters in a separate phone interview.

Iqbal said the MILF had been compiling reports on atrocities committed by the military and militiamen against civilians in Mindanao which it will present to the UN and the Organization of the Islamic Conference "given the chance."

"We're looking into the right time [to present the reports]. It's also difficult for us because the MILF is not a state actor unlike the Philippines, which can reach out to the United Nations anytime they wish because the Philippines is a member state," Iqbal said.

He said the foreign administration's latest move would impact on the stalled peace negotiations, adding: "Hanang tulay [the bridge has been burned] between us and the government."

Problems between the MILF and the government, brought about by the scrapped signing of the ancestral domain deal as part of the peace negotiations, should be resolved through the mechanisms set in place in the peace process, Jaafar said.

But the MILF leaders, Umbra, Kato and Pangalian—considered renegade MILF commanders by the government—are not terrorists.

PEACE INSTRUMENT

An elementary school pupil of Barangay Sta. Filomena Elementary School in Bigan City tangs an "agong" or mandy 12 soon on Tuesday, which plays with the town Muslim prayer during the Ramadan. (JOEL NAVALTA/INQUIRER.NET)

400 Guinsaugon families get houses

By Joey S. Gabieta
Inquirer Visayas

ST. BERNARD, SOUTHERN Leyte—Over 400 families who once lived near the devastated village of Guinsaugon here finally received their housing units in a simple ceremony on Saturday.

The turnover of ownership of the new houses held at the barangay health center of the relocation site now known as New Guinsaugon, which is actually part of Barangay Magbagacay, Kilometers from the mountainside.

Social Welfare Secretary Corazon Soliman said she was happy that finally, after almost two years of waiting, the beneficiaries now had titles to the houses built for them by the Department of Social Welfare and Development in cooperation with the Japanese government and the Habitat for Humanity.

On Feb. 17, 2006, over a thousand residents of Barangay Guinsaugon, including 200 elementary school children, were buried alive when boulders and debris from Mt. Canlaon collied down the village.

During the housing turnover, 96 families from Barangay Sug-angon, 105 families from Nuevo Esperanza and 235 from Apahag received their titles from Representative Minister Eso Okayama of the Japanese Embassy and Alberto Jugo, president and chief executive officer of the Habitat for Humanity Philippines.

The Japanese government provided P27 million while the Habitat for Humanity donated about P8 million for the construction of the duplex-type houses with floor areas of 20 square meters.

The local government of St. Bernard provided the relocation site.

INQUIRER Southern Luzon

Another Marinduque dam collapse warned

By Gerald Gean R. Querubin
Magsing, Marinduque

ANOTHER GRIM EPISODE OF the Mancopper tragedy, the country's worst mining disaster, may be unfolding in a poor farming town in Marinduque, according to the Mining and Geosciences Bureau (MGB), but villagers have assumed a state of disbelief when told that a disaster management plan was already in place.

A tunnel of Mancopper's Tapian Pit collapsed in 1996, sending both tailings and floodwaters downstream to the Makulapnit and Boac rivers. At least 20 people died from heavy metal contamination caused by the mine waste.

Now, MGB officials are warning that Mancopper's successor, Filminera Mining Corp. in the upland village of Bolo in Mogpog could give way and bring a massive flash flood to the town. Debris have accumulated in the dam through the years, clogging the pipe of its drawer.

Overtopping could occur as what happened in 1993 when flood swamped Mogpog, and the mining official says that the dam's embankment, but later assured the project from the 24 mining priority projects promoted by the Aquino administration.

Cont'd. Residents unaware

Brgy. Libtangin, a resident of Bolo, said he and his relatives were not aware of any disaster management plan or any information drive conducted by the concerned agencies.

"Every time rains from the [Mogpog] river overflows, villagers living along the riverbanks evacuate on their own. The local government has not even put up one safe warning device for possible flash floods," said Libtangin.

Leo Rhian ena Bellyanes, a college student and resident of Magsing, said she was also not aware of any disaster plans. Magsing is a lowland village and rice bowl of the Mogpog River.

"We are not informed of any evacuation plans and we do not even know if there are designated evacuation centers in our village," Bellyanes said.

Primarily an agricultural town, Mogpog (pop.: 51,822) is situated at the northwestern part of Marinduque. It is adjacent to the town of Sta. Cruz where the Mancopper mine disaster occurred.

What Went Before

On March 24, 1996, a plug in a drainage tunnel of the Tapian Pit of Marcopper Mining Corp. (Marcopper) failed, causing the release of about 1.6 million cubic meters of toxic mine tailings into the Makulapnit and Boac Rivers.

At least 20 persons died from heavy metal contamination caused by the mine wastes. The Marinduque Council for Environment Concerns said.

The spill, which shook the Boac River, is totally dead. It considered the country's worst industrial pollution disaster. It also affected the Bantad ding, Mogpog River and surrounding communities.

The government slapped Marcopper's operations in 1997. Placer Dome, the Canadian mining firm that managed Marcopper, left the Philippines without compensating the victims of the spill. Environmentalists also blame the company with violating the Water Code, Mining, Pollution Control Decree and various environmental laws resulting in damage to property.

In October 2005, Marinduque provincial government filed a lawsuit against Placer Dome in Nevada in the United States.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources had planned to rehabilitate the abandoned mine site, but later abandoned the

Almost half of its land is planted with coconut trees. Only 12 percent are irrigated and rain-fed rice lands.

The MGB investigating team admits that the concerned national agencies and the local governmental units are not ready to save many lives because to the Magsingbayan dam.

An access road to the dam has been redirected to a more trail, it said. Precluding operations and equipment available in case of an emergency.

The team notes that although a security detail, who also functions as a monitor, was assigned to the facility, there is no communication between the dam and the mine site. In case of a flood, the guard would be isolated since his outpost is right on top of the dam. The guard would not be able to warn the residents.

The MGB also recommends on a long-term solution a proposal presented by the UN Geographical Survey to evaluate and rehabilitate the slopes of the Magsingbayan mine dumps. A topographic survey must be conducted and design of the new slopes and drainage must be made by experts so that the risk will be minimized, it says.

Mayor Marcos Lindo, chair of the Municipal Disaster Coordinating Council, said in an interview on Sept. 12 that he had been meticulously monitoring the situations at the dam's disaster management program was one of his priorities after the town experienced flash floods in the past.

Early morning devices have been installed along the Mogpog River to warn residents along the banks and the coastal areas about sudden floods, he said.

"We are requesting the removal of the two sandpiles that were exported from the Office of the Civil Defense. Hopefully, the instruments will be installed within this month," Lindo said.

Lindo claimed that villagers had been regularly informed of the situation and trained on evacuation procedures, but he said they had not been reminded the MGB report which was based on a site visit by its inspection team on June 10.

Disaster plan

Saw Lindo, municipal administrator and member of the disaster council, claims that a disaster management plan was already in place, citing the regular occurrence of flooding in the villages along the river banks during the rainy season.

"Our MDCC is always on alert and we are in constant coordination with all concerned agencies. We have not seen a dike, as well, for our disaster management activities," he says.

He adds that the council had been religiously visiting barangays, conducting information drives, and laying out evacuation plans, with households at risk and possible evacuation areas identified.

"It is disappointing however, that most of those who are at risk are uncooperative when it comes to our evacuation procedures," he groans. They refuse to leave their properties even if flood set in already," Lindo laments.

"Installation of portions of the Mogpog River to discourage Mogpog it like we're negating," he says. As part of a long-term plan, the local government will build dikes and river control works, he says.

The MGB inspection report says monitoring the dam might prove to be difficult since it requires the cooperation of the mining company. Mancopper has stopped operating since 1996.

Myla Magalang, executive secretary of the Marinduque Council for Environmental Concerns, echoes the concerns of the barons. He says that the national government and the provincial government are the mining company could shoulder the high costs entailed in restoring and rehabilitating the waste dumps.

Professor, environment and natural resources officer Danilo Querubin says the threat was also a call for the people to remain friendly with the dam. The mining company responded, he says, but is requested only the decant of the dam, not the whole structure.

THE FLUVIAL procession marks the return of the image of the Virgin of Peñafrancia from the Naga City Metropolitan Cathedral to the Peñafrancia Basilica Minore.

CHURCH-CITY FEUD

Peñafrancia fiesta suffers hangover

By Jocan Calalo Soltes
Naga City

SINCE THE LAST PLASTIC GLASS OF BEER was emptied and the last brass music died in a night-long street party on Friday, Magayayay Avenue has been back to normal as one of Naga City's busiest thoroughfares.

The Naga River, scene of the traditional fluvial procession in honor of Bicol's patron saint, the Our Lady of the Peñafrancia, is still brownish black, abandoned to its cauldrons by the one million devotees and tourists who came to recall affectionate charity the week-long festival.

But Bicol's biggest religious celebration, the Peñafrancia Festival, last week was also its most controversial.

Local priests accused the city government of hamstringing "merging commercialism" to allowing street parties and sales of liquor under this, they said, were among the reasons why the event has been losing its religiosity.

Archbishop Leonardo Z. Legaspi reportedly made known his estimate to his homily during the Misa Mayor over the radio-television of the Marian procession, the priest even hailed his remarks in the presence of host company executives attending Mass at the Peñafrancia Basilica.

City review

Mayor Jesse Robredo said his administration would review all of the activities during the Peñafrancia fiesta—to which it usually did every year—so it could determine whether these would still be replicated next year.

But he took issue with the local church's open letter by local officials on Monday, the day before the main rites. It allowed the basic activities of the Marian procession, including the image's canonical procession, to be disrupted, he said.

"We like local church and the city government's local street business, but we have to accept that we both have limitations," Robredo said.

He added: "The local church could be in zero-in formation of the devotees. So, we have civic activities but if the devotees are well-informed, their faith in the Virgin of Peñafrancia will not be affected despite the commercial activities."

The mayor defended the holding of the million parade every Friday of the Peñafrancia fiesta week as a major crowd-drawer.

"The city hosts many conventions and city government earned last year when some seven pesos [participants] led to "pandemonium" and distressed Catholics from their devotion to the Virgin of Peñafrancia.

Militants who are believed to be aspiring for top national positions in 2013 name Former Senator President Rodolfo Drilon joined the Translation four processions, while Metropolitan Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando, Sen. Bong Revilla and Bhadlakan Rep. Rufus Rodriguez came for the fluvial procession.

Robredo said Fernando was allowed to speak to fill up an unexpected interruption during the military parade.

Shooters' stray bullets

Attendance of Senator President Manuel Villar, Sen. Mar Roxas and Sen. Richard Gordon were praised as strategic locations to the anniversary of many rich-donors who commended that the religious celebration was being used for political purposes.

Bicolis cannot quite celebrate, he was allowed to board the barge or "pagoda" carrying the image of the Virgin of Peñafrancia although his name was not on the official list. Only select people, including journalists, from the different parishes of the Archdiocese of Caceres are allowed to ride the barge.

Other issues brought out included the pollution of the Naga River and the supposed P300-million deposit of the archdiocese in the Good Golden 7 Bank. But Fr. Louie Coronel, spokesperson of the archdiocese, said the church deposit only amounted to P11 million and was mainly reserved for its social involvement activities.

Critiques also flew that the local church, not just the city government, had been constructing the religious activity.

Tarpaulins of telecom companies were spread inside the premises of the Naga City Metropolitan Cathedral. Bottle from soft drink companies filled the Peñafrancia Basilica and other Naga churches.

But Msgr. Rhando Vergara, rector of basilica, said the bounty were not meant for profit but to cater to the needs of pilgrims. The proceeds will be used for church maintenance, he said.

Minus the controversy, the fluvial procession drew an estimated 10 000. More people joined the fluvial procession. Farewell display after the high Masses lit up the sky for several minutes.

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Lisa Bate G. Dipasupil

DID YOU KNOW

THREE out of 10 (30%) children aged 5 to 17 surveyed by the Social Weather Stations (SWS) in 2005 were abused mentally (207 out of 716). A total of 112 girls and boys were victims of rape. 50 girls were victims of incest while 21 girls and four boys were victims of acts of lasciviousness.
Cyril L. Bautista, Inquirer Research

Alma Moreno faces bouncing checks rap

Actress-politician claims obligations already settled

By DJ Yap

THE PARAÑAQUE CITY PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE HAS found probable cause to indict actress-turned-politician Alma Moreno for issuing bad checks on payment for P350,000-worth of election campaign materials.

Assistant City Prosecutor Sheilani Reet Evasco sufficient basis to charge Moreno, who is running for reelection as Valenzuela Mayor, a Parañaque councilor, with violation of Batas Pambansa 22, or the bouncing checks law, based on a complaint filed by an advertising agency.

The complaint was filed by Maya Media Arts Vending Ads Inc., represented by its finance manager Evelyn Caro, who accused Moreno of reneging on her obligation to pay the company for campaign sorti in her failed mayoral bid in 2004.

Last year, Moreno ran for a seat in the city council. She was not the only the services of a different advertising company for her campaign materials.

Caro said Moreno issued two checks to pay for the campaign materials, one for P50,000 and the other for P120,000. Both were not honored by the bank because Moreno's account was either closed or had insufficient funds.

When the company sent representatives to personally demand payment from Moreno, she issued seven other checks, this time for P300,000, covering the

Lawyer Benedicto Malocoseres, who represents the advertising firm, said the check was also not honored by the bank, prompting the company to send representatives to personally demand payment from Moreno, to no avail.

Demand letters

This was followed by three demand letters, but Moreno still failed to pay the amount she owed the firm, according to Malocoseres.

In her counter-affidavit, Moreno said she never personally dealt with the complainant and that all transactions with the company had been endorsed by her campaign representative Lilibeth Peña.

She said it was Peña who had entered into the deals, and that her only participation was signing the checks.

Moreno further said her obligation to the advertising company had been settled "way back in 2004."

But in his resolution dated Aug. 3 but released only last week, Bare said there was probable cause to charge Moreno since all elements of the crime of BP 22 were present in the case.

He further noted that Moreno failed to present any written receipts to prove that she had already paid the amount due.

"Almost each and consecutive proof, respondent's allegation of payment is not worthy of belief," she said in the case page resolution.

She set the bail for Moreno's conditional liberty at P30,000.

In a phone interview, Malocoseres said the case would be raffled off to a trial court, and a warrant for Moreno's arrest would likely be issued soon.

The lawyer said he failed to reach Moreno for comment.

MORENO. Facing charges for reportedly issuing bad checks. INQUIRER PHOTO

3 suspected robbers shot dead by Marikina City police

By Beverly T. Mendrigal

THREE SUSPECTED ROBBERS were shot dead while two of their companions were arrested following a shootout with policemen in Marikina City Tuesday night.

Those arrested were identified as Salvador C. Felipe, 31, the alleged leader of the group, and Alvelo C. Dejesus, 26. They were charged yesterday with illegal possession of firearms and direct assault in the Marikina City prosecutor's office.

Three .38 caliber revolvers with ammunition and a hand grenade were seized from the suspects.

The two men, both residents of Barangay Sto. Niño in the city, were alleged members of a group behind several robberies in the area, the police said.

Senior Insp. Arsenio Hoban, deputy district director for administration of the Eastern Police District, told reporters yesterday that operatives of the EPD and Marikina police were on patrol Tuesday night on Gil Fernex St. Marikina Heights when they flagged down two men acting suspiciously on board a motorcycle.

The men, however, fired at the policemen, leading to a shootout.

One of the motorcycle riders was killed in the exchange of fire while another ran toward a nearby TX van without a license plate. The van then sped away.

A police team nearby managed to block the van. The vehicle's passengers, however, also fired at the lawmen, and another shootout soon ensued.

Three of the men inside the van were killed in the aftermath, while a third man was arrested. The three dead men have yet to be identified.

Marikina police chief Supt. Romeo Ramos said Felipe had been charged with robbery on five different occasions. Three of the cases were dismissed while the other two are still pending in court.

BEAUTIFICATION DRIVE
Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim and lieutenants, Administrator Ramil Harper plant five trees in Mandaluyong Park inside the Walled City as part of a campaign to beautify the area. MANUEL TRINIDAD

Tithing and the way of the Universe

MANY AMERICANS WOULD RATHER LOSE their mortgaged homes in the current financial crunch than give up tithing.

And because of that, their suffering will only be compounding.

Tithing is giving 10 percent of one's gross earnings to one's church or charity.

Tithing is giving a voluntary contribution practiced by some religions, mainly Protestant groups.

Those who practice tithing do not lack for money. If they do, because of the current financial slump, it's only temporary.

Whatever you strike, you own, in effect, thanking the Universe. (God, Allah, Dhyo or whatever you call the Supreme Being) for the blessing it has given you.

Your expression of gratitude to the Universe will be rewarded many times over.

In the more you give to the Universe through tithing, the more you receive; and the more you receive, the more you are able to give.

If you know anybody who is low, chances are he or she is financially well off.

However, most people who tithe do it in private. They are the anonymous donors to charitable institutions or victims of natural calamities.

* * *

Even if the United States is suffering from the worst financial slump since the Great Depression, it will never go bankrupt.

Why? Because for all their reckless materialism and extravagance, Americans are a grateful people.

They are grateful to the Universe to God for their wealth and well-being.

They thank God in unison by setting aside one day every year as Thanksgiving Day.

When you thank the Universe for the things that you enjoy, invariably, good health and happiness—the Universe will give you more of those for which you are grateful.

* * *

Even if you're poor, there are many things to thank the Universe for:

The purple-banded mountain viewed from a distance; the blue sky and the blue ocean; the beauty of the trees that make a haven; the flowing water in the brook, creek or river; the birds that sing on the treetops; the music of the crickets in a dark night; the shining stars on a cloudless night; the prime palms of the rain on your rooftop.

The gift of life. The greatest gift of all is to believe.

People who always complain that they don't have enough will never have more. The more they complain of poverty, the deeper they get mired in poverty.

For that is the way of the Universe.

* * *

The Court of Appeals has ruled in favor of Fm. Pueblo Lacuna who filed a P256.5 million damage suit against the Inquirer for articles they've written about him.

The Inquirer and this columnist argued that a Las Piñas court, where Lacuna filed the case, had no jurisdiction over the case.

I hope the decision had nothing to do with the fact that I have been criticizing the appellate court in my columns.

* * *

Despite alleged pressures from some politicians, the Makati prosecutor's office has ordered non-prominent businessmen brothers for trial.

The case arose from a complaint filed by the businessmen's partners, Adam Amorsolo II and Raul Arambulo, for allegedly misappropriating the company's money.

It's a good thing the Makati prosecutor's office didn't succumb to pressure.

Security escorts, SWAT team create stir in Makati City

By DJ Yap

THE SIGHT OF FOUR HEAVILY-armed men in a van standard pedestrians and motorists in a busy section of the Makati commercial district yesterday.

Within minutes, a battle-ready team of Special Weapons and Tactics operatives arrived on the scene and blocked the street.

The armed men, however, turned out to be security escorts of Customs Commissioner Napoleon Morales who had a meeting in the area, said Senior Supt. Gilbert Cruz, Makati police chief.

At about 3 p.m., the armed men on board a Toyota Innova were spotted near Export Bank on Jupiter Street, said Supt. Manuel Sarmiento Jr., chief of the Makati police investigation division.

"Somebody tipped off the Tactical Operations Command so the SWAT responded to the scene," he said. "It caused panic in the area."

Green parks for Las Piñas' 20 barangays

By Julie M. Aurelio

DON'T BE SURPRISED IF YOU SOON discover vegetable gardens amidst lush-bearing trees in Las Piñas City.

The city government will be putting up mini "green parks" in its 20 barangays, set aside to help concentrate city officials' tree plans to provide alternative food sources for residents.

The small patches of green will form part of the city's "president's crest" project launched on April 20 as part of the Earth Day celebration.

Mayor Vergel Aguilar said the idea of putting up "edible" trees in the president's crest of trees on the streets of the Alabang-Zapote Road and other open spaces.

Each barangay will be asked to allocate a pilot area for the mini-green park that will have mahogany trees, fruit-bearing trees like mangoes and ornamental plants.

"We will also have vegetables like malunggay, papaya, eggplant and herbal plants that, we hope, will be an alternative source of nutrition and medicine for the residents," Aguilar added.

The mayor earlier issued an executive order declaring the city's waterways, roundabouts and open spaces as "greenbelt areas" to help reduce the level of air pollution in the city.

"I wish everyone to help keep our surroundings clean and safe, not only to prevent the effects of the global warming but to provide our residents a livable city," he said.

The order requires all city officials, employees, students, residents and barangay leaders to plant a hardy tree in the greenbelt areas to reduce the effects of global warming as well.

"We expect to grow as many as 15,000 full grown trees and bamboos in the next five years," Aguilar said.

The city's Council on Environment and Greenbelt Area Project, headed by the mayor's wife, Imelda, will be in charge of the green belt areas with Rep. Cynthia Villar providing support.

METRO BRIEFS

Cops check rob story

AN ACCOUNTANT manager of a Canada-based advertising firm yesterday went to the Manila Police District to report the loss of P250,000 worth of valuables and identification papers.

Victor Villanueva, 48, a resident of Pagsanjan, Laguna, and assistant manager of Outing Advertising Print, said he was robbed inside an FX taxi cab in Sta. Mesa, Manila, shortly after midnight yesterday. He said two armed men, who pretended to be passengers, announced the hold-up in the course of Nelson Magsaysay Boulevard and Aurora Blvd. in Sta. Mesa.

They took his money and valuables, including a digital camera and several pieces of jewelry, he added. Police investigators at the MPD theft and robbery division said they were still checking the victim's statement after he could not corroborate it in his statement. Elena L. Aquino

Search on for top alumni

THE RAMON Magsaysay High School Espalda Alumni Association, Inc. (RMHSEAAI) has launched a search for top alumni who have excelled in their chosen fields. The search is part of activities marking the school's Golden Jubilee celebration in March 2009. The search is open to all bona fide graduates who have made significant personal, professional and community service to the country in their chosen fields of endeavors. Nominations forms may be downloaded at the www.ramon_magsaysay_high_school.com or the school principal's office at Ramon Magsaysay High School in Espalda, Manila. For more information, contact Felly Fredoluz at 99 03 56, 0921-7282282 or Jun Chan at 0927-671-8081 of the alumni search committee secretariat.

The WORLD

Editor Lawrence B. Quonio

Aso takes over as Japan PM

TOKYO—OUTSPOKEN conservative Taro Aso took power as Japan's prime minister on Wednesday after he overcame opposition forces in the split parliament, tasked with rejuvenating the ailing ruling party ahead of elections.

Aso, 68, was chosen as president of the long-ruling Liberal Democratic Party on Monday, and already had begun piecing together a Cabinet expected to include a fellow hawk as finance chief.

The former Olympic shotgun shooter was declared premier after the LDP-controlled lower house overruled the upper house, which had voted for Ichiro Ozawa, the chief of the opposition Democratic Party of Japan.

Aso, known for his rightist ideology and warrior aristocratic roots, will lead a country wracked by political divisions and spiking concerns over the economy, which has stalled amid the ballooning financial crisis in the United States.

"If you look at the current period, it's not a stable one," he told reporters in Washington one time. "There are turbulent times with the financial situation and everything else."

The first task for Aso, who takes over from Yasuo Fukuda after a rocky one year in office, will be to put together a Cabinet capable enough to raise public support ahead of lower house elections that could come before the end of the year.

Shoichi Nakagawa, a former economic minister considered to be in the right wing of the LDP, was seen as the leading candidate to become the new minister of finance. AP

Obama has 9-pt. lead over McCain, says poll

WASHINGTON—DEMOCRAT Barack Obama has opened a 9-point lead over Republican John McCain in the United States presidential race amid turmoil in the financial system and growing pessimism about the economy, according to a Washington Post-ABC News national opinion poll released on Wednesday.

Among likely voters, the poll found Obama now leads McCain by 52 percent to 43 percent.

Two weeks ago the race was essentially even, with McCain at 49 percent and Obama at 47 percent, the Post reported.

The Democrat's new lead becomes the No. 1 issue leading up to the Nov. 4 presidential election.

Fifty-two percent of those polled said they believe the economy has moved into a severe long-term decline.

Eighty percent said they are concerned about the overall direction of the economy, nearly three-quarters worry about the shocks in the stock market...and six in 10 are apprehensive about their own family finances, the newspaper said.

Half of the respondents called the economy and jobs the single most important issue that will determine their vote, up from 37 percent two weeks ago.

The poll found Obama has a big edge as the candidate who is more in tune with the economic problems Americans now face, the Post said.

The Illinois senator also has a double-digit advantage on handling the current problems on Wall Street, and as a result...there has been a rise in his overall support, the report said.

Just four six weeks before the election, Independents now favor Obama, 53 percent compared with 39 percent for McCain, 50-Cain had a small lead among these swing voters just after the Republican convention.

Two weeks ago, McCain had a substantial advantage among white voters. Now the candidates are evenly among white women. Reuters

SENATOR Obama

A STUDENT brings a candle in front of the Kauhajoki vocational high school for the victims of the shooting rampage.

Finnish gov't eyes tougher gun laws

HELSINKI—FINNISH PRIME Minister Matti Vanhanen said on Wednesday he would push for stricter gun laws following a school massacre in western Finland that left 11 dead.

Vanhanen said the shootings on Tuesday would lead to a reevaluation of Finland's gun laws, which allow 15-year-olds to acquire guns for target or hunting purposes.

He told reporters the government would reconsider if "people should get access to handguns so freely."

Tuesday's massacre followed a similar school rampage last year. The government promised back then to raise the age for buying guns but did not.

The latest incident killed eight women and two men, police said on Wednesday.

The National Bureau of Investigation said all the women were students, while one of the men was a teacher and the other a student.

The bureau said the 22-year-old gunman, identified by Finnish media as Matti Juhani Saari, also wounded an additional female student before shooting himself in the head.

Investigators said the gunman set fires in the school which seriously burned the victims of Tuesday's massacre.

The shootings reverberated online. Many Finland's related gun laws and raised questions about whether police could have stopped the bloodshed.

Government officials and police said they would review the handling of the case, which bore chilling similarities to a shooting in Switzerland, when an 18-year-old gunman at a high school near Helsinki killed six students, a school nurse and the principal before shooting himself to death.

Such gunmen posted videoclips on YouTube prior to the shootings, both were fascinated by the 1999 Columbine school shootings in Colorado, both attacked their own schools and both died after shooting themselves in the head.

One clip posted by the alleged gunman on Tuesday's attack showed him pointing his gun to the camera and saying "You will die next" before firing three rounds.

Still, some experts said it would be unfair to blame Finnish police for the shooting.

"It's unfair to expect police to be able to be clairvoyant like the movie 'Minority Report' and know whether or not someone making a video intends to commit horrible outcomes with that video," Interpol Secretary General Ronald Noble told the AP in a telephone interview.

He was referring to the 2002 Steven Spielberg film in which an elite law enforcement squad is able to predict crimes before they happen. AP

Indian traders outraged over death of firm's boss

NEW DELHI—INDIAN BUSINESS groups reacted in shock on Wednesday to the government's support for workers who beat to death the boss of the Indian company that had sacked them.

Fortune employees at car parts maker Graziano Transmissions attacked chief executive Keh Rakesh Chaudhary at the firm's offices near New Delhi when discussions over a long-running labor dispute turned violent, police said.

Chaudhary, a father with one son, was hit on the head with a rock or an iron rod and was declared dead on arrival at hospital, they said.

India's labor minister declined to sentence the attack, saying it "should serve as a warning for management."

"Workers should be dealt with with compassion," Oscar Fernandes told reporters, according to the Press Trust of India news agency.

"The workers should not be pushed so hard that they resort to whatever happened."

Media reports said workers were dismissed after they demanded pay rises and allegedly ransacked the firm's offices in a Delhi suburb.

"I can't believe someone in the government is condoning something like this," Rajeev Chandrasekhar, president of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, told reporters.

"Set innocent man has died. I am frankly flabbergasted. I am shocked."

The Confederation of Indian Industry said there was "nothing in the world that can justify [pushing of any person and no dispute can be settled by murdering an adversary."

The groups said the killing would harm India's international business image.

Graziano, in a statement to Indy, said it was appalled at the incident.

More than 150 people have been detained and are facing charges ranging from rioting to murder. AFP

WORLD BRIEFS

Nalcor expels nuke inspectors

VIENNA—North Korea has kicked out inspectors and plans to reintroduce nuclear material at its Yongbyon plant next month, the International Atomic Energy Agency said on Wednesday, adding that IAEA seals and cameras were also removed. The latest development comes just days after North Korea confirmed it was working to restart the Yongbyon reactor and no longer wanted its concessions promised under the landmark agreement to return for its denuclearization. On Monday, North Korea had asked the IAEA to remove seals and surveillance equipment from Yongbyon. AFP

5 cops killed in Kabul attacks

KABUL—Two Kabul policemen were killed and their commander wounded on Wednesday in a bomb blast at a city police post where an overnight ambush had killed three of their colleagues. Five Afghan government and Kabul police chief Abdhul Rahmand had gone to the small police post in the west of the city to investigate the overnight attack by "armed men," authorities said. Rahmand survived the bomb blast with minor injuries but two of his officers were killed, they said. AFP

Thumbs down from Iran

UNITED NATIONS—Iran's leader flashed a thumbs-down on Tuesday as United States President George W. Bush denounced Tehran as a sponsor of global terrorism in his farewell address to the UN. Then Bush got less than 15 seconds of polite applause at the end of a speech in which he urged world leaders to take "an unrelenting moral stand" against satanic bombings, hostage taking and other terror tactics. It was a decidedly low-key appearance, rehashing familiar themes, devoid of the passion Bush displayed in the early years of his presidency when he summoned the world after Sept. 11, 2001 in a battle against terrorism and blunt—but failed—to unite UN backing for the war in Iraq. AP

Chinese toys hit sour note

MOSCOW—A shipment of musical Chinese toys hit a sour note at the Russian border when officials seized them and accused their manufacturer of pirating popular songs from Soviet-era cartoons. Authorities charged the maker of the electronic toys with breaking copyright law for borrowing songs beloved by generations of Russian children without notifying the authors, the daily Novaya Gazeta reported on Wednesday. Vigilant Siberian customs officials uncovered the violation on Tuesday despite the low quality of the recordings, which made it hard to identify the songs. AFP

AIR BAGS FOR THE ELDERLY

Japan's safety goods maker Prop president Hiroaki Uchida displays the air bag for elderly people with epilepsy to prevent injuries from fall during the International Home Care and Rehabilitation exhibition in Tokyo on Wednesday. The vest-bag, weighing 0.8 kilogram, is equipped with acceleration and gyro sensors to open head and hip parts before the user falls to the ground.

ICGMD|08

www.icgmd.info

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON GENDER, MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT:

Seizing Opportunities, Upholding Rights

Sofitel Philippine Plaza, Manila, Philippines
September 25-26, 2008

MALACAÑAN PALACE
MANILA

Warmest greetings to the organizers and participants to the **International Conference on Gender, Migration and Development: Seizing Opportunities, Upholding Rights**.

The conference which will be attended by about 300 governments senior officials and parliamentarians, leaders of all civil society organizations, trade unions, academe, private sector and international and regional organizations, will genuinely address the issues and challenges confronting our migrant women and their families. It is also expected to build global and multi-sectoral partnership and networks to strengthen the approaches to protect the rights of migrant women and their families.

Now I am thankful to the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW) for organizing this event in cooperation with the government, such as the United Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Children's Fund, Migrant Forum Asia/Migrant Rights International (MFA/MRI), Philippine Migrant Workers and Overseas Institute (Miriam College-WHRI) and the Lila Ozaeta Foundation for Women and Children, Inc.

The Philippines is the appropriate venue for the conference has big outlook both in the world in closing the gender gap.

Let me also thank all the distinguished guests, keynote, and to-be-held speakers, the rich and potent paper presenters, who will tackle the impact of migration on developing countries and the significant issue of "Feminization of migration." Papers in this conference will certainly contribute to the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the deliberation of the 2nd Global Forum on Migration and Development to be held also in Manila on 27-31 October 2008.

Let us continue working towards promoting and protecting the rights of migrant women.

Mabuhay sayong lahat!

GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO

MANILA
25 September 2008

UNIFEM

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
NATIONAL COMMISSION ON THE ROLE OF FILIPINO WOMEN
"Filipina Shaliters for the Advancement of Women"

We warmly welcome all the delegates to the International Conference on Gender, Migration and Development: Seizing Opportunities, Upholding Rights.

Today, we are witnessing the increased mobility of persons across national borders - and the phenomenon of the feminization of migration. Recognizing the significance of the phenomenon, the government introduced and implemented notable efforts at the policy and program levels to ensure that women, both those who migrate and those left at home, are able to effectively benefit from this movement.

In recognition of the growing problems brought about by this movement, many international organizations started addressing the issue of female migration such as the United Nations Population Conference in Cairo, the Women's Conference in Beijing, and ILO conventions. The UN General Assembly likewise adopted the Resolution on Violence Against Migrant Workers in 1994. This same Resolution was also adopted by the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

Women offer all, complete mixed bill of the global labor migration population. The discrimination, violence and exploitation that they face are both serious human rights and development issues.

In response, the Philippine government has put in place mechanisms to ensure that throughout the process of migration, the rights of women migrant workers are protected. Despite our interventions, we have not always been successful. There have been numerous undocumented cases where our poor women have become victims of harassment, abuse, violence and even death. Pursuant to the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the International Convention on the Protection on the Rights of Migrant Workers and their Families and taking into consideration our regional and international commitments with the ASEAN and the UN, the Philippine government has undertaken to join the timely and appropriate actions associated with migration, particularly to prevent the trafficking and exploitation of women and girls. It is but fitting that the Philippine government exerts efforts in recognition of the contributions of overseas contractors to the economy and to gender discussions.

We are hopeful that women and human rights in the context of migration at all be given focus in this conference. The discussions during this event is expected to inform a strong gender perspective in the 2nd Global Forum on Migration and Development which the Philippines will also host in October 2008.

To all migrant women who dream and strive to be economically successful, remember, the NCRFW is our ally vis-à-vis your cause. The protection of your rights as migrant workers is vital to sustainable development and the realization of human rights for all.

Mabuhay ang mga nagsisipag kababayan!

CHAIR MARILA T. TAN
NCRFW

The Convenors and Programme Sub-Committee Members – Seated: Ms. Linda Wirth of ILO; Chairperson Tan of NCRFW; Hon. Amanda Bira of Miriam College. Standing: Ms. Arabella Cox of International Organization for Migration; Ms. Libby Tobias of ILO; Ms. Sylvia Calvano of ILO; Ms. Mary Agnes de Mesa of UNIFEM; Mr. Emmanuel Veneracion of NCRFW; and Ms. Lea Rodriguez of UNIFEM. Not pictured: Ms. William Cole and Ms. Ma. Lorena Villaflores of MFA and Ms. Jane D'Cunha and Dr. Manuel Siddayao of UNIFEM.

Special thanks to our Program Sub-Committee Members: Department of Labor and Employment, Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, International Organization for Migration

ICGMD 2008 OFFICIAL PROGRAMME

Day 1 **25 September**

Opening Ceremonies

8:30 am Keynote Address — **HE. Delia Domingo Albert**
Philippine Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Germany
Former Secretary of the Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs
Former Chair of ECOSOC Security Council

Conference Overview
Overview Paper on Migration, Gender Equality and Development/Overview Paper on CEDAW and Migrant/Overview Paper on ERC, Gender and Migration

Regional Perspectives
South Asia — Europe — Americas
Pacific — Middle East

1:30 pm **PARALEL SESSIONS 1 "The Gender Dimension of the Social Costs and Benefits of Migration: Issues, Challenges and Set Way Forward"**

Session 1.1 Gender Issues and the Contribution of Migrant Workers to National Development: A Handling and Retaining Countries

Session 1.2 Gender Impact of Migration on Children and Families of Migrant Workers

Session 1.3 Gender Issues and New Dimensions in Addressing Trafficking in Persons

Session 1.4 Improving Health Services and Social Protection for Women Migrant Workers

Session 1.5 Migration, Gender Identities and Empowerment

Session 1.6 Migration and Feminized Labour: Challenges and Prospects

3:30 pm **PARALEL SESSIONS 2 Upholding Rights of Women Migrant Workers**

Session 2.1 Gender Issues in Formal and Informal Recruitment Processes and Working Conditions

Session 2.2 Legal Status and Welfare Services for Domestic and Household Workers Recognizing Domestic Workers Rights and Protection Needs

Session 2.3 Gender Responsive Action for Migrants Caught in Crisis and Conflict Situations

Session 2.4 Trafficking in Women and Children: Interrogating Demand and Working Gender Equality Perspectives of Four Countries

Session 2.5 Upholding the Rights of Child Migrants

Session 2.6 Violence against Women Migrant Workers

DAY 2 **26 September 2008**

9:00 am **PARALEL SESSIONS 3 Seizing Opportunities for Enhanced Gender Equality and Benefits of Migration for Women and their Families**

Session 3.1 Role of the Private Sector and Corporate Social Responsibility in Upholding Rights and Opportunities for Women Migrant Workers

Session 3.2 Role of Governments in Shaping Gender Responsive Policies on Migration

Session 3.3 The Role of Organizations, Unions and Networks in Upholding Rights and Opportunities for Women Migrant Workers

Session 3.4 Migration of Highly Skilled Women: Issues, Concerns and Rights

Session 3.5 Empowered Economic Participation of Women Migrants Through Entrepreneurship and Financial Literacy

1:30 pm **PLENARY**
Presentation of Draft Manila Call to Action
Discussion of Call to Action

4:00 pm **CLOSING CEREMONY**
Presentation of Manila Call to Action to the OPDS
Response from the Government, United Nations and Civil Society Representatives

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WHAT'S INSIDE
Eagles seek sweet sweep /A22

SPORTS
Editor/Publisher: E. Maliksi
Assistant Editor: Francis E.J. Ochoa

Hoya hires Marquez mentor /A23

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Lions just a roar away from title

NONETU's Ajuel Rosal (c) grapples for ball possession against Elvis Jake Pascual of San Beda during Game 1 of the NCAA men's basketball finals at the Araneta Coliseum.

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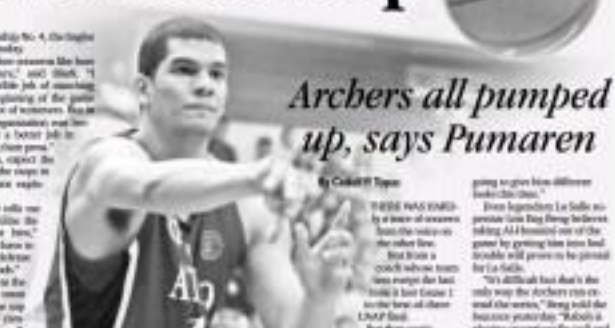
UAAP CHAMPIONSHIP

Eagles seek sweet sweep



THE CAPE plan—tie it to La Salle or Ateneo—starts to revolve around Rabeh Al-Hussaini. GERARD CAMPANILLA

Archers all pumped up, says Pumaren

By Cedelf P. Tupas

THERE WAS ENERGY in a trace of sweetness from the voice on the other line.

But from a coach whose team fans swept the last time it lost Game 1 to the best of three UAAP final.

But then again Frisco Pumaren, the assistant La Salle mentor, just knows his Green Archers all too well.

But they don't worry him too much even if they are teetering on the brink of getting dethroned by three-peat champs.

History is not on the Archers' side, however, since only four teams have come back from a 0-1 deficit to win the title since the best-of-three finals was adopted in 1986.

Still, Pumaren is convinced his current brand of Archers are capable of duplicating the feat of the 1999 La Salle team that lost Game 1 to Santo Tomas, before winning two straight to clinch back-to-back titles.

"I talked to my players. All I know right now is that the players know our predicament and they are ready to rise to the occasion," said Pumaren.

"We're ready for Game 2. All the players are pumped up."

Pumaren said the Archers' success will hinge on how they meet the game, their situation television and their defense on Ateneo's big man, Rabeh Al-Hussaini, who will be honored as the league's Most Valuable Player shortly before the 4 p.m. clash.

"We are ready to stop Rabeh," said Pumaren. "We are going to give him different looks on defense."

Even legendary La Salle supporter Lim Eng Hong believes taking Al-Hussaini out of the game by getting him into foul trouble will prove to be pivotal for La Salle.

"It's difficult but that's the only way the Archers can extend the series," Hong told the business paper. "Rabeh is playing exceptionally well and you have to put bodies on him."

Hong said the Archers must step on the gas and play the tournament game to the fullest.

"La Salle must use its speed, run, run and run," Hong noted.

The last time the Archers played the Eagles in the finals, they also won Game 2 to extend the series only to one in the decider.

The last time La Salle lost Game 1 in 2005, though, they got swept by the Far Eastern U Tamaraws.

The Archers' stunned pressprexed offensive in the third half of Game 1. But they could only muster Ateneo's end of 25 turnovers in 39 points, an output rather disappointing Pumaren.

Al-Hussaini made the archers pay by scoring from the perimeter and inside the paint on his way to 11 points on 3-6 of 26 shooting.

The Archers also got hammered under the boards, yielding a season-high 17 second chance points to the Eagles.

La Salle was overwhelmed, 44-40, and shot a woeful 20-of-70 from the field.

La Salle last lost in a UAAP finals in 2005, when to the Tamaraws. With a report from Dennis Erno, Inquirer Libre

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UAAP Men's Basketball Championship
3 p.m.—Individual Awards Ceremony
4 p.m.—Ateneo vs. La Salle
(Game 2, best-of-three finals)

By Jasmine W. Payo

TO BE THE FINEST AT THE FINISH.

There's certainly no secret to Ateneo's existence more than the UAAP championship is within grasp of the four-peat Blue Eagles.

"The goal is to win the championship and we haven't done that yet," said Ateneo coach Norman Black. "I think if you review after we win games, we're happy but we're not overexcited because we know the job is not finished. There really hasn't been a confidence in saying it's done. The concentration is still there."

A sweep over the La Salle Green Archers, of course, is the perfect ending the Blue Eagles went in the men's basketball championship at 4 p.m. today at the Araneta Coliseum.

But the Eagles know it will take more than Just Most Valuable Player Rabeh Al-Hussaini to make Game 2 in this season's final showdown between the country's age old rivals.

"During the time of the year, it's important for everybody to contribute, not just one or two guys," said Black, who is gunning for a fifth UAAP title again after being mentored by Philo Iannotta and the Green Tamaraws in 2006.

"I thought the support players did a good job. We have several players in [and inside the Game 1], and they normally play a lot more minutes than they played in that particular game. But the other guys held the fort for us admirably, and I want able to get the players back in the game."

Ateneo is actually shooting for a fourth sweep in basketball championship overall, but wins in 2007, 1988 and 2002. The Eagles' last two crowns came at the expense of the Archers.

This is the fourth Finals meeting for the two universities with La Salle prevailing in 2005 to complete a league-tying four-peat with UST. The Archers own seven UAAP crowns overall.

"It pull off championship No. 4, the Eagles need to be even better today.

"There are a lot of other reasons like how to break their pressure," said Black. "I thought we did a horrible job of executing their strategy at the beginning of the game and we committed a lot of turnovers. But in the second half, our organization and execution I thought we did a better job in breaking and attacking their press."

And the Eagles, too, expect the Archers to put out all the stops to avoid a similar 31-point explosion by Al-Hussaini.

"My coach's instruction tells me that's not going to utilize the same defense against him," said Black. "So we also have to combat whatever defense they put up against Rabeh."

Sustaining their top spot in the league's top defensive unit will also be among the top concerns in the Eagles' pre-game for their fourth overall crown.

The Eagles held the Archers to just an average of 63.7 points, while scoring 71 points of their own in three encounters this season.

"It has been really the key for us," said Black of his wards' consistently tough defensive stance. "I may sound a bit repetitive, saying the same things all the time, but when we finish the game and you look at the numbers, that's basically what's winning the game for us."

La Salle legend finally offered a game ticket

By Dennis U. Erno
Inquirer Libre

LIM ENG HONG, THE 57-YEAR-OLD former La Salle superstar and part of the PBA's 25 greatest players of all-time, can't really watch the biggest championship season, between college basketball's Green Archers rivalry live.

Johnny Abrigo, president of the De La Salle Alumni Association, offered his mentor just to bring after reports came out that the ex-Archers gunslinger could not purchase a ticket to watch his alma mater play.

"Most done were things's permanent is needed to serve as inspiration for the Archers," Valdez said. "I will be glad to give him the ticket because he has given the school countless wonderful memories."

Valdez said Hong can pick up the ticket anytime he wishes it.

Known for his outside shots and fearless drives to the lander, the 5-foot-11 Hong helped La Salle end a 15-year title drought by winning the 1971 NCAA crown. But his best career three years later when as a senior, he exploded with 33 points as the Archers beat the Ateneo Blue Eagles during the 1974 championship.

He was awarded the Most Valuable Player after averaging 31 points per game during the season.

He also saw action in the PBA from 1975-1980 for the U-Tex Wranglers.

"I'll always treasure my La Salle days. I am a Green Archer forever," said Hong.

Namssa 8th leg kicks off; San Andres leads entries

THE BATTLE FOR SUPREMACY CONTINUES as the country's top motocross riders return for another round of exciting maneuvers in the eighth leg of the National Motorcycle Sports and Safety Association (Namssa) Motocross Series-Mayor Weddie Tinga Cup at the Sta. Teresita Center in Tagaytay City.

Race rider Kenneth San Andres aims to outdo his sports for the Motocross Rider of the Year award as he goes for a crucial win over tough rivals.

San Andres has so far accumulated a total of 228 points after seven rounds of this series to stay in solo leadership with a 26-point margin over former champion Joey Gealog who's second overall with 209.

But Gealog is keen on making a motocross comeback and sees this season as a perfect opportunity to regain the throne.

Joining them are Jessley Manuela, Racewatch rider Willie Ramos, Jun Carlo Feliciano and former champ John Jao.

"The weekend races are going to be wet and solid but the four Track Circuit in Tagaytay has been water-proofed and proper drainage is managed very well," said Husky Gaspiler, Namssa president.

The Junior 65 division is expected to be a three-way battle among Lorenzo Bellosa III, Rafael Enriquez and Erik Silva for the plum.

Bellosa is on top of the table race with 201 points while Enriquez and Silva follow closely with 172 and 163 points, respectively.

For details, log on to www.namssa.org or call (02) 7.440.9285.

ABS-CBN vs Team Bulacan

ABS-CBN AND TEAM BULACAN POSTED contrasting wins to arrange a Holy Showdown for the 'Go! Manny Sports League (MSL) 9-a-Side Cup media edition at the SM Mall of Asia Arena at the Star Mall in Mandaluyong.

ABS-CBN outshadowed Prestige Tanes, 8-3, in the crossover semis while Team Bulacan stunned Super Radyo-CBN, 8-3, to forge the title duel on Sept. 27.

'Big Event' bets undergo strict screening

THE "BIG EVENT" IS ON THIS FRIDAY when the country's best steps, screened and examined by legitimate organizations, do battle in the Pinoy Coliseum.

The National Cockers Association (NCA) will stage the first installment of the Big Event. Several organizations will screen their entries to the fights. In the morning of the event, breeders Johnny Johandoni and Boy Negros will reexamine the participants to make sure they are indeed qualified.

The NCA management reserves the right to reject any entry that does not meet the requirements.

Among the breeders joining the Big Event 1 are NCA chair Rudy Alfonso, Patrick Ancheta, Paul Bitterlich, Armand Bautista, Bebot Uy and Allan Tan, Sonny Uy, Gerry Gomez, Allen Sison, Bobby dela Cruz, Bebot Medalla, Negros Occidental Rep. Iggy Arroyo, former Rizal Gov. Isi Ynares, Efren Cuadra, Bebot Villar and Claudio Bacolod.

Bacolod hosts Villar Cup

SENATE PRESIDENT MANNY VILLAR announced the staging of the next leg of the Villar Cup from Nov. 27 to 28 in Bacolod City during a dinner held to honor Bernie Dreidley for winning the China leg of the Guinness 9-Ball Tour recently.

Efren "Bata" Reyes will lead the Barefoot leg of the tournament, with past world champions like Mika Immonen and Thorsten Hohmann committing to participate.

It will be the fifth leg of the series, which will also feature cup and country stars.

"Billiards is the sport that we should not expect because we already produced world-class players and we expect more world champions in the future," said Villar.

Also slated is the Quezon City-Philippines vs the World Grand Billiards Showdown.

Villar also cited former world champion Alex Pagulayan for winning the Guinness Four Singapore leg last July, and Fidel Arena, who captured the Guinness Champions 9-Ball Challenge last week in the United Arab Emirates.

Present during the affair were members of the Billiards Managers and Players Association of the Philippines including former world No. 1 Francisco "Django" Bustamante, former Asian Games gold medalist Cindy Valle and Southeast Asian Games multi-gold medalist Rubilen Amit.

Gracile-chunked Villar for the senator's puppets "not only for us but to other up-and-coming players [who want] to be recognized throughout the world."

SPORTSWATCH

ELOPTCH VP, Amateur Softball Association-Philippines president Jose Hew Lineiker (third from right) gets elected as the vice president of the Asian Slopitch Softball Federation during the Ninth Asian Slopitch Championship in Taipei. (From left) ASA Philippines secretary general Danny Francisco, Wang Kuo-hsiung (director general), Robert Hsu (pic gm), Ms. Sun and Ms. Ming-chang.

Mighty Sports-SJ takes Game 1

MIGHTY SPORTS-SAN JUAN LEAD ON THE ELITES' backets of former PBA star Bal Lonzo and Edrick Ravena in local Manila 8, 71-68, and move within a win of clinching the crown in the 1st Inter-City basketball tournament Monday at the San Andres gym in Manila.

The San Juan debuters of Mayor JV Ejercito and Mighty Sports can wrap up the title with another win on Wednesday at the San Juan gym.

RGBA's 1st Leg Stag finals today

THE RURAL BANKERS ASSOCIATION OF IMUS (order stage today with the 3-stag championship of the RGBA 1st Leg 6-Stag Derby at the Pasig Square Garden. More than 60 matches are slated at the arena, now under the stewardship of Eric dela Rosa. RGBA president Joey Sy guarantees exciting matches.

MBT BACKER. MBT Commissioner Nilo C. Fernandez (3rd from left) and Sonny Ico-Rasca-Chua, trustee of the Don Antonio Rasca-Chua Foundation Inc., seal the deal making the foundation as the major sponsor of the 2008 MBT 2nd Conference. With them are Lucy Lim of China Airlines and Jun R.C. Rodriguez.

SENATE President Manny Villar (left) presents the Senate commendation to Dennis Orcollo.

POC bets must declare intention to run in October

By Marc Anthony Reyes

CANDIDATES FOR THE PHILIPPINE Olympic Committee presidency must declare their intention to run one month before the May 2009 elections.

This was one of the guidelines drafted yesterday by the POC commission on elections which also asked all 41 member-national sports associations to submit nominees and suggestions regarding the regulations that will be issued.

POC president Jeping Cojuangco of equestrian is running for a second term against shooting's Art Macapagal, a half-brother of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Tuchman's father, Lucio Cojuangco, the incumbent chair, is reportedly eyeing another term under Macapagal's tribe, while neighboring's Rep. Mikee Romero, the POC first vice president, is reportedly running against him on the side of Cojuangco.

International Olympic Committee representative to the Philippine Frank Rhodes, the Comelec chair, said his commission will be ready with the guidelines before the weekend.

The guidelines will be distributed to the 100-plus which have until Oct. 3 to comment on them.

"They can make suggestions for as long as they comply with the constitution and by-laws," Asencio said of the bayanan after presiding over a general assembly meeting at Milky Way in Makati.

Pantovenilla said the winning number is 21 votes.

But there are suggestions that in the event of a three-way fight for the presidency, the winning number of 21 must still be observed.

While only 14 votes is needed to win by plurality under their constitution, some NSA heads think handing a bigger number of votes means a stronger mandate for the winner.

Cojuangco and Macapagal recently held their respective birthday parties with observers saying the attendance could serve as gauge of their winning chances.

Cojuangco's bash was attended by high-profile PBA's like coach and GenCol, swimming, bowling and boxing, while no less than President Arroyo graced Macapagal's party, which drew top officials from the less popular sports.

CONTINUED

2 Taiwanese enter world 10-ball meet

TAIWANESE ACES DANNY HSUEH AND Chang Pa-lung were undefeated in the matches after two days of qualifying on Friday to in the main draw yesterday of the 9th, first-ever World 10-Ball Championships.

Pa'l broke out of a 6-all tie with Filipino Victor Arjallesa to win the final three racks for a 9-6 decision, while Hu had no trouble time against countryman Lee Po-hsien, 9-4, on both pocket perfect 6-0 rounds.

The two joined Taiwanese compatriots Wu Chia-ching, the former World 9-Ball champion, and Ko Pin-yi in the $400,000 event that gets going Monday at the Philippine International Convention Center.

The qualifying event going on at the Star Billiards Center in Quezon City will complete the final lineup of the 128-men main draw.

Taiwan now has a total of nine players as the biggest Asian delegation with host Philippines having eight, led by former Asian Games champions Antonio Gabica and Efren Reyes.

Jeffrey De Luna also made the tournament proper together with veteran journeymen Edgar Ranola, Mario Manalastas, Elmer Rabagatan, Efren Calimoso and teenage sweeper Jericho Navarro.

Conspicuously missing are the country's top guns including world No. 1 Dennis Orcollo, former world 9-Ball champions Rubilen Amit, Ronnie Alcano, Alex Pagulayan and Ronnie Alcano and the reinstated Francisco Bustamante.

All are members of the Non-Attorney Billiards Managers and Players Association of the Philippines (BMPAP) formed last November.

The World 10-Ball is held under the auspices of Billiards and Snooker Congress of the Philippines with Hoya Sports as promoter.

Pa'l was rewarded over the flamingo second on Pagulayan in the 2004 WPC 9-Ball, sinking the seven out of an Arjallesa miss on the No. 1 ball in the 12th frame, promptly drawing up the table before winning the next three to advance.

Hu, meanwhile, scored victories over Jess Bonifie, 7-3; Alfred Tenemaro, 7-4; Jim Barr, 7-4; Leonardo Global, 7-3; and Lu Hui Chun, 7-5, before that continuing triumph over Lee.

Bhaong S. Castillo

Hoya hires Marquez mentor

By Marc Anthony Reyes

OSCAR DE LA HOYA'S PLAN TO adopt Juan Manuel Marquez's old strategy against Manny Pacquiao is already become a reality with the Golden Boy formally hiring veteran trainer Nacho Beristain.

The legendary Beristain, who trained Marquez in his two fights with Pacquiao, will prepare De La Hoya for his Dec. 6 fight with the Filipino ring icon, the Golden Boy announced yesterday.

And already Beristain has an idea of how the fight will go.

Beristain told sportswriters job that the fight will last the distance, but if it ends earlier, it's going to be by unilateral knockout for Oscar.

"I can tell you it's going to be a great fight because Manny Pacquiao is an excellent fighter, Oscar De La Hoya is the best fighter in his case I can say Manny Pacquiao has everything to gain and nothing to lose," Beristain was quoted as saying.

De La Hoya sought a new trainer three weeks ago after Floyd Mayweather Sr., his longtime cornerman, agreed to train Bobby Flames for his Nov. 22 bout with Pindie Mahgiangi.

Mayweather accepted the job before De La Hoya finalized his 147-pound (67-kilogram) fight at the MGM Grand Garden in Las Vegas against Pacquiao.

"Nacho Beristain is a great trainer who I have respected for many years, and I'm honored to have him in my corner," De La Hoya said.

"Considering that he prepared Juan Manuel Marquez for two fights against Manny Pacquiao, he knows him very well. I'm confident that with Nacho's game plan and my execution, we'll be victorious on Dec. 6."

Beristain, a Boxing Hall of Famer, is the chief trainer in the last three fights for De La Hoya (38-5, 30 KOs).

He worked with Freddie Roach in the split-decision loss to Floyd Mayweather Jr. on May 2007, and Mayweather Sr. returned to his corner for his victory over Steve Forbes last May.

Roach is Pacquiao's longtime trainer, and his public pronouncements about the Filipino icon's superiority and De La Hoya's failing skills overlooked the Golden Boy to accept the fight, which is certain to be the sport's most lucrative bout this year.

"Oscar De La Hoya is one of the premier fighters of this era, and I am excited about working with him for this very important fight," Beristain said. "I already have a plan in mind for Manny Pacquiao, and I know Oscar will do whatever it takes to carry that plan through on fight night."

Roach said in a separate interview that he doubts if Beristain would "change Oscar into Marquez" within the next few months.

"Once the bell rings, Oscar's going to fight the way he wants to fight," Roach told the LA Times. "That's what he did with me too. He just needs a guy in his corner to calm him down and get him a drink of water."

The two-time Trainer of the Year and Future Hall of Famer said the recent shakeup in De La Hoya's camp all the more makes him confident. "Manny's very confident and I'm very confident. We'll be very well prepared."

HUMP! Pacquiao (right) evades punches with Juan Manuel Marquez in their second encounter on March 15. Oscar De La Hoya has hired Marquez's trainer, Ignacio Beristain (inset), to prepare him for his bout against Pacquiao on Dec. 6.

TOUGH TIMO

Team Philippines joins Tafisa World Sports

TAGAYTAY MAYOR AND CHEF de mission Abraham "Bambol" Tolentino is optimistic that the "brain and sweat Team Philippines will win medals" in the Tafisa World Sports for All Games slated in Buenos Aires, Argentina on Sept. 30-Oct. 3.

Backed by the Philippine Sports Commission, the Filipinos will compete in wushu, muay thai and dance sport in the event which have hosted 10,000 athletes from 100 countries.

Tolentino is hoping for Beijing Olympics wushu gold medalist Willy Wang to deliver.

The other team members are wushu's Mary Ann Batiston, Sarajhi Silvera, Bedro Quina, and Shaira Stephanie Agbay; muay thai's Roland Claro, Kenneth Pabalate, Jonathan Palomo, Roldan Aquino, May Libas, Maricel Balang, Jay Dial and Jay Harold Grigorio; and dancesport's Filomena Salvador and Michelle Dela Serna.

So who'll pull the Filipino off the floor?

BARE EYE

Ricardo Trinidad

THERE'S THIS URGENT REQUEST for a picture of the typical Filipino sports-politician.

Sorry, but this dreaded figure aren't for me to paint.

There are just too many of them nowadays.

They also come in all shapes and sizes.

Anyway, a model figure should be that of the national sports association head who, thinking he really did great in the 2006 Doha Asian Games, readily executed his the 2007 Manila congressional race.

A recommended figure, despite the millions assigned to his association for the medal haul in the recent Beijing Games, he has remained remember.

* * *

Our failure of the bear has, in fact, wanted to stay in his post, not matter what.

Yes, he has become a national nuisance.

But he's not quitting.

He continues to claim he has a mission to serve.

He also loves to recycle outdated boasts—like himself!

* * *

Of course, it would be easier to pursue the sports ambitions through his seat.

The things he loves to do!

Still, for a sampler, he loves to flog a deadhorse.

Take that court action, lodged through his defeated Bukidnon Congressional seat of the Philippines, which eventually nullified the running of the national basketball coach and the formation of a national squad for the 2009 Fiba Asia championship.

* * *

The sports politician also loves to sit on hot horse.

He's, ironically, a race-horse-loser.

His late lordy horse] leading it over finite, SP sports will never be able to get off the floor.

He changes winning ways to give way to personal whims.

Take the case of Eugene Torre, the acknowledged grandmaster who has served the Philippines for over three decades.

Please read Torre's letter for a better idea of what the dreaded sports-politician is all about.

* * *

The President
National Chess Federation of the Philippines
Greetings!

After numerous years in the Olympiad beginning with Siegen 1970, Nice Germany, this coming October 2008 Olympiad is unusual because many people I talked to suggested that I should not be needed to be a national team. To my surprise, a few of them are players who are themselves contending for a place in the team.

With reluctance, I am now writing for the first time to my federation regarding my inclusion in the national team for this coming Olympiad.

The reason being that, in case I will be fortunate to get your support, the Philippines would match the twenty (20) times record of world-renowned Hungarian GM Lajos Portisch in Olympiad participation. And, God willing, it will put the Philippines on the verge of completing a record-breaking twenty-one (21) appearances in the near future. This can be enrolled as tremendous-ing, check 20-ish and look at 9&1 Time Olympiad Records".

Modesty aside, I believe I deserve to be awarded not only because it will be a historic achievement for our country but also because I have been active in my own country's top world play and steady pacing at the top of the final standings. I have also maintained my ELO rating above 2500 by more than three (3) decades. You may also check at the same time for your personal time I'm listed in my previous elements (118 consecutive Olympiads.

At the moment, I see myself good for two (2) more Olympiads which is enough to achieve a record of twenty-one (21) appearances. Considering my age, it is my hope that the PESP will again use from the ripes of selection tournament and commend its support for that rare opportunity.

This request is sent for the country's gain than personal. With your backing, we can show the world that Filipinos are made of sterner stuff. The feat will serve as a testament to the Filipino's tenacity and durability in all endurance competitions.

Very truly yours,
Eugene G. Torre

* * *

A two-time Sportswoman of the Year and Philippine Sportswriters Association Hall of Famer, Torre has been turned down.

The SCPF board allegedly chastised Torre was a has-been, loss no-one.

Meanwhile, Torre beat GMs Li Shilong, Li Chao, Zhou Weiqui and Zhang Zhying in winning the 2008 Cup last week.

Not even Europeans have done that feat of beating four top Chinese players in one event.

Total Information bowling gets rolling

TOTAL INFORMATION MANAGEMENT recently staged its 17th Annual Friendship Bowling Tournament at SM Mall of Asia Bowling Center in Pasay City. The tournament is every Wednesday night until October 8, 2008.

"We are truly honored by welcome all the participating teams this year," said Mr. Jose Mari Alvarez, president and CEO of TMI Corp. "Each year, the tournament has become increasingly exciting. We feel very happy that our humble tournament has been graced by players that can very well

make it to the Philippine team."

The participants are: Bayantel, Banco de Oro, China Bank, China Trust, Coke, Eastern Communication, General Milling, GSIS, International Containerization Intelligence, Kforce Global Solutions, Landbank of the Philippines, Manulife, Pag-ibig Fund, Philippine Airlines, Philippine Veterans Bank, Philtrust Bank, Philippine Retirement Bank, Professional Regulation Commission, RCBC, Smart Communications, Team Energy, Union Bank of the Philippines and UCPB.

PHILIPPINE BADMINTON ASSOCIATION

NOTICE

All bonafide Club Members of the Philippine Badminton Association (PBA) are hereby notified that the next General Assembly Meeting is scheduled on January 31, 2009. This date was agreed upon during the last meeting and election held January 27, 2007.

Any general assembly meeting, other than the scheduled date of January 31, 2009, is null and void, and will not be sanctioned by the Philippine Sports Commission.

PBA BOARD

SPORTS

Naga, Sorsogon champs lead CCL Region 3 finals

THE REGION 3 FINALS OF the 2008 Smart-PLDT Collegiate Championship League kick off one of several regional championships of the country's biggest collegiate tournament, with University of Nueva Caceres leading a sixteam battle beginning Friday at the Naga City gymnasium.

The Greyhounds, the Naga city champion, are ranked No. 1 followed by Quezon titlist Manuel S. Enverga University and Legazpi city winner Computer Communications Development Institute.

Aurora de Naga, Ateneo Sorsogon College of Sorsogon and Computer Science & Technology College of Sorsogon, Quezon are the other Region 3 finalists.

The Region 3 champion, which will take home sporting goods Palos league sponsors, will advance to the Zone 2 championships slated in November.

Playing in the zonal games are UAAP fourth placer University of the East, the NCAA fourth champion and three wild-card squads.

The top two teams in the zonal championships will make it to the FIBA Flying V "Dawn 30" Final Challenge competitions in Manila.

For more details, visit official website www.Collegiate-Championships.net.

Romina S. Jandoc

Welcome back, Lance

ADELAIDE, AUSTRALIA—SEVEN-TIME Tour de France winner Lance Armstrong will begin his comeback to professional road cycling in Australia's Tour Down Under in January.

Mike Bates, premier of South Australia state, made the announcement Wednesday hours ahead of the American's planned media conference in New York to announce details of his comeback.

Armstrong's appearance in Australia in January was also confirmed as The Australian Prize by Tour Down Under race director Mike Turtur.

The six-stage Tour Down Under, the first event on the 2009 world pro cycling calendar, will be raced from Jan. 20 to 25 in South Australia state, centered on the capital Adelaide.

Armstrong announced on Sept. 9 that he is returning to cycling after three years in retirement and would attempt to win the Tour de France an eighth time.

"The confirmation just came through that he will start in our race in January," said Turtur, a former Australian Olympic cyclist who won gold in team pursuit at the 1984 Olympics.

"It's great news for Adelaide and the Tour Down Under. We're all looking forward to the comeback of the greatest cyclist that ever toured the Tour de France. He is a superstar in the same category as Tiger Woods."

Armstrong is set to join the Astana team, where Johan Bruyneel, Armstrong's team director for all of his Tour de France victories, is the sports director. The two are close friends.

On Wednesday, Kazakh business officials told AP that Armstrong will join Astana. They said Armstrong will make the announcement at his news conference in New York, and spoke on conditions of anonymity as was not to preempt that announcement.

Officials with Team Astana could not be immediately reached for comment.

Nikolai Pankratov, deputy head of Kazakhstan's Cycling Federation, confirmed Armstrong would be making an announcement with Team Astana but refused to comment further.

There were reports in Madrid on Tuesday that Spanish rider Alberto Contador would leave to rejoin the Astana team.

"I've missed the right to be the leader of a team without having to fight for my place," Contador said in an newspaper. "And with Armstrong, some difficult situations could arise in which the team would put him first and that would hurt me."

Contador, the 2007 Tour de France champion, won the Spanish Vuelta on Sunday. Combined with his 2008 Giro d'Italia title, he became just the fifth cyclist to win the three highest-regarded Tours. AP

LANCE Armstrong's comeback regime in Australia's Tour Down Under in January

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PBA preseason: Barako surprise Tigers

RED BULL BARAKO, A TEAM that's rebuilding from scratch after disposing of the last of its backliners, scored a surprise 99-91 rout of the Coca-Cola Tigers in the PBA preseason tournament at the Ateneo Blue Gymnasium.

Dicky Hubalde poured 34 points and stroke-free-agent Nash Cruz, hoping to launch a spot in Red Bull's roster, added 20 for the Barako, who stunned the Tigers with their game-long brilliance.

Sidney Rodriguez, acquired from Air21 in exchange for the Barako's 2009 first round pick, grabbed 13 boards as Red Bull outrebounded Coca-Cola 51-32, 45-44, and closed out its preseason outing with an even 1-1 record in Group B.

Red Bull effort in also defensively with good ball rotation, steadfast defense and constant hustling.

But Tigers led all scorers with 21 points, although he showed signs of slowing down, prompting observers to wonder whether the 35-year-old former Most Valuable Player, nicknamed "The Beak," could still keep up with the rigors of the game against the league's rising young big men.

The backcourt tandem of Sunjay Barnuevo and Alex Cabagnot contributed 15 and 12 points, respectively, for the Tigers, who tainted by as many as 20 points.

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RICOH

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BUSINESS

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Buffett bets $5B on Goldman Sachs

Investment seen to be a vote of confidence for Wall St. institution

OMAHA, NEBRASKA—Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway Inc. is investing at least $5 billion in Goldman Sachs, a huge vote of confidence for one of the survivors of the credit crisis that felled two of its investment banking peers.

In addition to buying $5 billion in preferred stock, Berkshire also got warrants to buy another $5 billion in Goldman's common stock. Goldman also said late Tuesday it would raise another $5.5 billion in its own public stock offering.

The news sent shares of Goldman Sachs and stock index futures soaring in electronic trading, after the Dow Jones Industrial Average posted a triple-digit decline for the second day in a row.

It also could lead to new probing questions from lawmakers for Treasury Secretary Hank Paulson, a former co-CEO of Goldman Sachs. He and Federal Reserve Chair Ben Bernanke told Congress hours earlier that quick action on a $700-billion bailout measure for financial services firms was needed to prevent economic havoc.

Goldman Sachs' shares had been tumbling ahead of the announcement of the government rescue plan last Friday as investors feared it could face the same kinds of funding squeezes as their Stearns and Lehman. Now members of Congress have worked with a plan while it looks to many taxpayers like Wall Street is already cashing in.

Buffett, one of the most successful investors in history, made no mention of what is happening in Washington, but he did heap praise on the New York-based firm.

"Goldman Sachs is an exceptional institution," the chair and CEO of Berkshire Hathaway said in a news release. "It has an unrivaled global franchise, a proven and deep management team and the intellectual and financial capital to continue its track record of outperformance."

Buffett's latest investment comes two days after Goldman Sachs Group Inc. and Morgan Stanley the last two

BUSINESS/B3

(See stock market report on Page B3)

Shares close higher

SHARE PRICES EDGED UP BY ALMOST ONE percent on selective buying of blue-chips that had fallen in recent days, dealers said.

The Philippine Stock Exchange index closed 23.05 points higher, or 0.98 percent, to 2,378.33.

The broader all-shares market also rose 15.78 points or 1 percent to 1,588.07.

Value of trades continued to be light at P3.04 billion with 1.385 billion shares changing hands.

There were 92 advancers against 50 decliners, while 53 stocks were unchanged.

Some bargain hunters took a liking to blue chips, anticipating that the bailout package in the US would be passed, said AP Igncio Arlan of BDO Trust.

PCCI Securities Brokers Corp. president Francisco Ed Lim also said the local market reacted positively to news that the US Congress failed to vote by yesterday's deadline. "[If] positive overnight on news that chairman [Warren Buffet] would invest in Goldman Sachs Group Inc.

SHARES /B4

RP firms' foreign investments under watch

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

THE SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMmission (SEC) has placed under close watch the investments made by Philippine mutual funds and pre-need firms abroad, in light of the global crisis spawned by soured housing mortgages in the United States, a ranking official said.

The official, who preferred not to be named, said the SEC was closely monitoring offshore investments made by Philippine banks using their trust funds, as well as those of local mutual funds.

According to the official, uncertainties continue to linger abroad, and that the fallout from the financial crisis has spread to emerging markets such as the Philippines.

"The last thing you want is to sell people to start unloading [their investments] in a fire sale," the SEC official said.

But the ranking SEC official believes that foreign investments of trust funds and preneed firms are not substantial.

To date there are 45 mutual funds—companies who handle investors' money by parking it in stocks, bonds or other financial instruments to attain returns based on specific investment objectives, the paper said.

Some 30 developing countries recorded an exit through 2009 as a result of food and fuel price increases, based on the IMF's updated assessment.

IMF managing director Dominique Strauss-Kahn said that while the international community was currently focused on the ongoing financial crisis in the western world, "it is important not to lose sight of the 'other crisis'—the continued debilitating impact of food and fuel hikes on some of the world's poorest countries."

"While food and fuel prices have eased somewhat in recent months, they remain well above their levels at the onset of the recent price surges," Strauss-Kahn said. "What this means for a large number of countries—particularly in Africa—is a significant shock."

As of mid-September, oil prices were at 40 percent below their mid-July peaks of over $147 per barrel—still double the levels recorded at the end of 2006. Similarly, food prices have eased 8 percent from their June peaks, but are still about mid-2006 levels.

As a result, the IMF projected that net fuel-importing low-income countries were facing an increase in their

MAP/B4

INQUIRER MONITOR

Figures that matter in our nation's life

Customs revenue hits P187.5B (January to August 2008, in billion pesos)

Collections by the Bureau of Customs for the first eight months of 2008 have increased by 19 percent from P157.8 billion in the same period last year. BOC expects to collect as much as P288 billion by the end of the year, surpassing its 2008 official target of P284 billion.

Source: Bureau of Customs, Inquirer Research

Data Process Inquirer Research

Asian shares up on Berkshire investment news

SINGAPORE—ASIAN FINANCIAL SHARES and US stock futures rose on Wednesday after Warren Buffett surprised the market with a $5-billion investment in Goldman Sachs.

Fixture stocks knocked some of the safe-haven premium off US Treasuries and the dollar inched down against the euro as fears continued to grip investors that US lawmakers would stall a proposed $700-billion bailout of the battered financial sector.

Crude oil futures edged up toward $107 a barrel, paring Tuesday's losses of nearly $3, ahead of US government inventory data expected to show declines in crude and gasoline stocks.

Japan's Nikkei gained 0.2 percent, while MSCI's index of Asia-Pacific stocks outside Japan, which slumped to a two-year low last week, was up 0.3 percent to 360.5 GMT.

US stocks fell on Tuesday with the Dow Jones industrial average and S&P 500 both losing around 1.3 percent, amid exasperation at wrangling over Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson's plan to buy up toxic mortgage debt as financial institutions' balance sheets in an effort to resolve the root cause of the current financial crisis.

But news that Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway was investing in Wall Street's most powerful firm sent US index futures surging as much as 25 points.

In Hong Kong the financial sector also led gains, with China life up 2.8 percent and ICBC up 2.4 percent, as the Hang Seng Index put on 0.9 percent.

According to French Lord of Fulbright Securities, the move by the world's most famous investor has been taken as a sign that there may soon be value in the battered down sector.

Japan's third biggest bank, Sumitomo Mitsui Financial Group (SMFG) also planned to invest several billion dollars in Goldman, according to the Kyodo news agency, though SMFG said it had no plans to do so for now.

SMFG shares added 2.1 percent.

South Korean stocks rose 0.9 percent, re-

STOCKS/B4

IMF: High inflation a bigger worry than global crisis

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY Fund has urged emerging economies like the Philippines to continue their efforts to curb inflation and not be distracted by the ongoing global financial crisis.

According to an IMF research which is released to Washington DC late night, the impact of commodity price increases in developing countries, far from diminishing, continues to mount since the Fund's previous assessment in June.

The IMF's simulations showed that the Philippines, in case of a prolonged "high" oil price shock—or an average price of $132 per barrel, the commodity peak this year—could swing back to a current account deficit equivalent to 0.4 percent of domestic output next year. Foreign reserves in months of next years' imports of goods and services would reach a scenario would fall to 4.6.

But under a "low" oil price scenario—assumed using an average price of $104 per barrel—the Philippines could sustain a current account surplus equivalent to 1.3 percent of domestic output in 2009 while foreign reserves would be enough to cover 5.5 months of imports of goods and services, the paper said.

Blame excuses

HALF OF WORLD AHEAD IN NEW York City, according to Wednesday, our leader, President Arroyo, supposedly resolved a "foothold" from the top executives of Citigroup.

Everybody knows that Citigroup enjoys a good reputation in international finance.

In fact, when the US financial meltdown was just beginning to show, Citigroup was among those big institutions that the government called on to help in averting the crisis.

Now, Bank of America already bought Merrill Lynch, another US-based bank called Wachovia was also reported to be eyeing a takeover of Morgan Stanley. UK bank Barclays absorbed the US operations of Lehman Brothers.

As far as I know, Citigroup has yet to figure prominently in such a wholesale "bailout" of US financial institutions.

Well, it seems Citigroup itself has been going through tough times. Dating perhaps to its size—which is really, really big, reports have been saying that Citigroup would probably have to break itself up into more manageable units.

According to the Bidenzburg boys, President Arroyo had 40 minutes with Citigroup executives with lots of "insights and inside stories" on the US financial crisis.

I am not sure if Mr. Arroyo believed everything she heard.

It's just that her boys needed something to justify her expensive trip to New York, as if her presence in the session of the United Nations General Assembly was not enough.

But, hey, in the same way that they hate House passing, the business people really have no need for more of those latest excuses.

* * *

ACCIDENTAL: in our scenario, put together as early as September last year by the chief economist of the Hong Kong arm of an international finance group, the height of the US financial crisis should be happening about now.

In short, it is going to be longer and worse for business.

The forecast is that things will get better only in 2010, which will be just in time for our presidential elections.

I think that my local president will be much luckier than President Arroyo. And I didn't have to go to New York to know it.

* * *

SMART IT: funny what media has made out of Security Bank Corp.'s disclosure with the Philippine Stock Exchange?

The bank said it did not have any exposure—whether "direct or indirect"—to the bankrupt Lehman Brothers.

Simple enough, right? Wrong...reports have been citing the bank as among those with exposure in the failed US investment house.

Now it is true that Security Bank volunteered that it had a $10-million exposure in Merrill Lynch.

It so happens that Bank of America already bought Merrill Lynch. Thus, Security Bank now has a $10-million exposure to Bank of America.

How different is that? Well, Bank of America is the only largest bank in the US now.

* * *

PONDER: Sen. Ernesto Herrera, who is the TUCP secretary general, wants the GSIS to disclose how it invested some $1 billion in Bristol (instruments) overseas.

Earlier, the GSIS announced it had zero exposure to Lehman Brothers.

And on the question is, well, is what Herrera did the GSIS put the money?

Apparently is more all means, which could lead to panic, local banks readily acknowledged their exposure to Lehman.

The Bangko Sentral also decided to defend the peso to stop speculation.

With its $1 billion in investments overseas, the GSIS probably owns up more than just a statement that it had no exposure to one single US entity.

No wonder, Senate President Manuel Villar is asking Senate investigators to investigate GSIS' finances.

Gov't plans to borrow more in Q4 for '09 requirement

By Michelle V. Ramos

THE GOVERNMENT PLANS TO tap again the international capital market before the end of this year to raise funds for its 2009 requirements.

"The country does not need more foreign commercial funding for this year but it may have to borrow again in the fourth quarter to pre-fund 2009 requirements, in case the market becomes very difficult next year," Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said.

There have been speculations that the global financial market situation could worsen next year due to the possibility that more foreign banks would disclose liquidity problems arising from their exposure to the US sub-prime mortgage market.

If that would be the case, Teves said, it would be wiser for the government to borrow this year to have enough funds for its 2009 requirements.

He, however, stressed that the pre-funding proposal should be studied carefully.

Early this year, the government raised $500 million from the sale of bonds in the global capital markets.

Treasurer manages earlier decided to borrow between $500 million and $750 million more to help finance an expected P75-billion budget deficit this year.

But the Bureau of the Treasury said the government still had enough liquidity and that it might no longer need to borrow foreign commercial loans for 2008.

If the deficit would be lower than P75 billion, the Bureau of the Treasury said, the government could rely solely on domestic borrowings.

However, Teves said it might be prudent to get hard cash funding requirements if studies would tell that the global economy would be more volatile next year.

The Philippines has programmed $1.5 billion in foreign commercial borrowings for next year to help fund the approved budget deficit of P98 billion and to pay maturing obligations.

The government also programmed to borrow $1.1 billion in official development assistance, which is chaired ODA, however, are tied to the implementation of projects and programs approved by the lenders.

The Philippines' biggest ODA providers are the Japanese government, the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank.

In the meantime, the government programmed to borrow P921.6 billion from the domestic capital market next year, through auctions of treasury bills and bonds.

Listed firms' profit down 12.2% in H1

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

THE COMBINED NET INCOME OF 6286 parties listed on the Philippine Stock Exchange fell 12.2 percent to P126.5 billion in the first six months from P144.10 billion in the same period last year due to higher operating costs, foreign exchange losses and a drop in the value of their stocks, PSE president Francis Lim said.

In a statement, the PSE said that despite the income drop, the combined revenue of these companies grew by 10.8 percent to P1.255 trillion in the first half of the year from PL.133 trillion a year ago.

"Our listed companies enjoyed strong revenue growth as their investment and expansion projects in previous years have started reaping dividends. But because of the unfavorable macroeconomic environment, their net incomes have suffered from high operating costs and asset revaluations," Lim said.

He said the financial turmoil in the US and the spiraling oil prices stunted the local economy's growth momentum.

"Our listed companies are now being challenged on find ways to thrive as a time consumers are adopting austerity measures given the rising prices of goods and services," he said.

Economic growth for the first half of the year slowed down to 4.6 percent, as inflation hit double-digit levels. Crude oil prices moved near the $150 per barrel mark in the second quarter. As of mid-August, the inflation rate has soared to a 15-year high of 12.5 percent.

Geograce to develop PGMC mining area

By Amy R. Remo

LISTED FIRM GEOGRACE RESOURCES Philippines Inc. said its board had approved the signing and execution of an operating agreement with another mining firm to develop a nickel mine area in Isabela.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, Geograce said the agreement with Phelmers Group Metals Corp. covered about 45 hectares of the latter's mineral property in Dinapigue, Isabela.

The agreement gives Geograce the exclusive right to develop and operate within the designated mining area.

The 45-hectare land forms part of PGMC's 2,394-hectare mineral property in Isabela. The property is under a Mineral Production and Sharing Agreement.

Granted an environmental compliance certificate early this year, PGMC is allowed to mine up to 2 million metric tons of nickel ore yearly from its Isabela property.

PGMC also signed a separate ore to Surigao del Norte, from which it ships nickel ore to Australia's Queensland Nickel Ltd., a wholly owned subsidiary of BHP Billiton.

The company also operates three forested nursery projects in Mauban, Mesamia Oriental; Bigao City; and Surigao City, Cebu.

Geograce also disclosed that its board had approved the revision of the company's work programs with regards to the use of the proceeds from last year's 1:3:3 stock rights offering.

It said the amount would serve as a reimbursement to PGMC for the production cost of the ore currently in the stockpile of its Isabela mine.

Last month, Geograce and Nihao Mineral Resources International Inc. signed an agreement with Jiangxi Jiuer Rarth and Jiuer Metals Tongsun Group Co., one of China's major rare earth companies, for the exploration and development of mining holdings in Zambales.

Citi sees peso ending the year at 45-to-$1 level

Bank expects weakening to P47 to a dollar in 2nd quarter

By Dara C. Duallas

US FINANCIAL GIANT Citigroup expects a continuing volatility in the local foreign exchange market as a result of the global financial turbulence, projecting the peso to end at 45-to-$1 level this year but return to 47 by the second quarter of next year.

Yesterday, the peso closed at 46.44, up from Tuesday's finish of 46.56 to the dollar, at the Philippine Dealing System.

Ariston global financial economist, the euphoria initially triggered by a $700-billion US bailout plan for distressed financial institutions was supplanted by growing anxiety over its execution given the risks of a sharp US recession.

In a Sept. 19 commentary, Citi economists for the Philippines Jun Trinidad said the recent market volatility would trigger a massive shift among retail investors to liquid, safe assets. This, he said, would tighten bank lending and limit access of borrowers to longer-term loans.

"Limited credit access, alongside poor consumer and business sentiment, would reinforce our expectations that durable goods spending, including spending for capex (capital expenditures), would be handicapped in this environment. Alleviating this potential credit crunch would require a policy bias that's geared on rates, while the initiation of liquidity if need arises," Trinidad said.

The economist said the increase in the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' benchmark interest rate, the overnight borrowing rate, to 6 percent in late August might be the end of its monetary tightening campaign.

"But believe prevailing market conditions comprise an excellent opportunity to reassess positions moving forward. Monetary policy would be on a neutral footing at this juncture," Trinidad said.

He said that lower bank margins and US Treasury bailout plans would certainly go a long way toward stabilizing southern risk perception.

"This would also allow the markets and the BSP to seek a bottom level for the local currency that would be conducive for normal trading," Trinidad said. He projected that the exchange rate would settle at 46.50 to the US dollar at end-September. In the first semester of 2009, he said the peso would likely trade between 46 and 47 to $1.

"We expect the peso to weaken modestly against the dollar...down 50 centavos on one day and up by 20 centavos in the next session—as the local currency continues to trade on moods, speculation and news on unfolding event risk triggered by Lehman's bankruptcy," he said.

Music, Lodestar buying Abacus coal assets

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lazaro

CEBU HARBOR MOLE Development Corp. and Lodestar Investment Holdings Corp. have agreed to jointly acquire for P500 million the coal assets of listed firm Abacus Consolidated Resources Holdings Inc.

In a disclosure to the stock exchange, Mole said it would purchase with Lodestar, on a 55-percent to 45-percent basis, all the outstanding shares of Abacus Coal Exploration Development Corp., the holder of a coal-operating contract.

Abacus' contract covers 7,000 hectares of coal reserves in Surigao del Sur, mined at P3,869/kilowatt/hr/gross, titles and interests of Mancarin Abacus Consolidated.

Cagwi Appraisers Inc. placed the value of the coal property at P3.169 billion as of May 2008.

Mole and Lodestar are expected to conduct a technical, legal and financial due diligence on the coal property within 90 days from yesterday, the signing date of the "heads of agreement."

Preliminary studies on the project showed that the coal property had an estimated geologic resource of 182 million tons of "relatively good quality" coal with a Btu (British thermal unit) range of 7,751/10,21 and an average Btu of about 8,800.

The deal is expected to close on or before June 30, 2009, pending the completion of the due diligence.

From the Ivatans of Batanes to the Tawi-tawians of Tawi-Tawi

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Alsons to pursue ₱3.8-B, 40-MW hydropower project

By Nancel W. Domingo

ALSONS CONSOLIDATED RESOURCES yesterday said one of its subsidiaries was eyeing a P3.8-billion, 40-megawatt hydropower project in Negros Occidental.

Ovidio Arvin G. Belay, Alsons corporate information officer, told the Philippine Stock Exchange that Alto Power Management Corp. on Wednesday presented to the provincial government a preliminary feasibility study on the project.

Belay said the 40is study proposed a cascade of three run-of-the-river hydroelectric facilities with a combined generating capacity of 40 MW.

The proposed project would tap the upper Bago River, on which three were previous studies conducted for National Power Corp.

"For technical, geological and safety reasons, the (Alto) study downgrades the Hapsoco studies which considered dam with reservoir type facilities," the company said in a statement.

Alto said this was due to the fault lines in the area and its closeness to Mt. Kanlaon.

According to the Alto study, the proposed project would take four years to build.

The project is also looking at selling electricity at P4 per kilowatt-hour, excluding the effects of inflation and cost increases, which was low relative to prices of existing facilities in the province.

"To complement, Central Negros Electric Cooperative currently pays almost P5 per kWh, including transmission charges for power sourced from Hapsoco," Alto said.

The company added that upon approval of the provincial council, Alto would proceed with the preparation of a full feasibility study that would include detailed engineering, economic and environmental assessments.

These steps are needed to confirm the preliminary conclusions and form the basis for subsequent project implementation, Alto said.

Shares close higher

From page B1

"Bullish investment is seen as long as the top 40 financial institutions in the US are secure," Gilbert said.

Local stocks have been mimicking the trend in global markets as foreign investors' money continued to be pulled from the Philippines.

Total foreign selling amounted to P1.28 billion while total foreign buying stood at P996.7 million.

Energy Development Corp. gained 7.93 percent to P5.46, while Ayala Corp. rose 0.86 percent to P292.50. Ayala Land Inc. rose 2.13 percent to P9.86.

Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. fell 0.68 percent to P2,888.

San Miguel Corp. saw its A shares rise by 9.89 percent to P84, while its B shares gained by 10.2 percent to P54.

Nancel W. Domingo, BFP

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Live your life to the full with the new Sony Ericsson G705

GET YOUR OWN PERSONAL ASSISTANT with the new Sony Ericsson G705 mobile phone. The 2.4" screen enhances the premium web experience, whether you are searching Google direct from your idle screen, checking e-mails through the phone's Exchange ActiveSync capabilities or using the in-built web browser.

The G705 lets you juggle your day the easy way.

This elegant slider phone, complete with large 2.4" screen, allows users to surf the Internet at high speed with turbo 3G and in full HTML browser – just use the dedicated key and you're straight through to Google search from the idle screen. Page a bit too small? Use the illuminated zoom rocker key or just tilt the phone and it automatically switches to landscape view.

"The G705 is ideal for those who need a bit of help organizing their busy life," said Dido Lee, vice president of marketing, sales

and distribution at Sony Ericsson. "This life-enhancing phone has everything you need to keep track of your daily activities and is perfect for keeping in touch with friends. It also allows you to stay fully up-to-date thanks to the full HTML browser, e-mail support, and desktop RSS feeds – all delivered at turbo 3G speeds."

The G705 keeps you updated with the information you most long-term as you via RSS feeds that are delivered straight to your phone's desktop. Whether its sport scores or news from around the world, let the first to break that story to friends at work colleagues. Complete with 3.2 megapixel camera and video capability, capture your favorite and funny moments straight to the web for friends all over the world to see. Time to relax? Use the phone's WMA music services to upload pictures, create a picture blog or download music and videos from your favorite web sites. Entertain your friends and family with all your great images on the 1GB memory card, or relax with the sounds you want through the built-in FM radio.

On your way to an important meeting but can't find your way? The inbuilt aGPS combined with Google Maps for Mobile and MapFactor navigation means that you will never have to ask for directions again – and it will even help you find a restaurant or bar to relax with friends and family.

In addition, Sony Ericsson is pleased to announce a partnership with Google meaning that YouTube will be integrated into selected upcoming models from Sony Ericsson. This capability will allow users to instantly download and upload video directly from their phone to YouTube. The G705 will be YouTube compatible and further models will be announced at a later stage.

The new G705 ensures you stay one step ahead of the rest with the following features. There is a large 2.4" screen to view websites and e-mails with high clarity and HTML browser to surf the net how it was meant to be. Automatic rotation lets you switch from portrait to landscape with just a tilt of the phone. The Google shortcut key lets you get to Google from the idle screen with one key press. Inbuilt aGPS combined with Google Maps for Mobile and MapFactor navigation to help you never get lost again. Wi-Fi and HSDPA certified lets you connect the way you want. A 3.2 megapixel camera to snap and share your favourite images via Bluetooth and YouTube compatibility lets you upload videos or download favorite clips.

The G705 supports DSM/GPRS/EDGE 900/900/1800/1900 and UMTS/HSDPA 2100. G705 will be available in selected markets from early Q4 in the colors Silky Gold or Majestic Black.

DISPOSAL COMMITTEE
Provident Operations – NCR South
307 Justice Building, Sen. Gil Puyat Ave.
Makati City

Invitation To Bid

The Pag-IBIG Fund is inviting offers to buy by way of Public Auction on "AS IS WHERE IS Basis" the following UNSERVICEABLE PROPERTY of the Provident Operations – NCR South consisting of the following:

LET 1 : Furniture and Fixtures (Various "F")
LET 2 : Computer and Computer Peripherals (Various "P")
LET 3 : Office Equipment and Other Waste Materials (Various "E")

Bidding Guidelines/Documents will be available at the Cash and Administrative Division, Pag-IBIG Fund Mandaluyong Extension Unit, Ground Floor, Mandaluyong Extension Unit, Boni Avenue corner Boni Serrano Avenue, Mandaluyong City upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Five Hundred Pesos (P500.00) to the Pag-IBIG Fund cashier.

Pre-Auction conference shall be held on October 5, 2010 at 2:00 p.m. at the 6th Floor, Multi-Purpose Hall, Justice Building, 317 Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City. Inspection of Unserviceable Properties and Equipment shall be on October 6 and October 12, 2010, Schedule of Auction/Bidding shall be on October 14, 2010 at 2:00 p.m. at the same place of aforementioned address.

For further inquiries and/or information please call Ms. Rosanna A. Del Rosario and Mr. Edgar S. Rabelo at 8172000 and 404 (3600ext) or visit our Pag-IBIG website at http://www.pagibigfundgov.ph or submit via e-mail at pagibig@pagibig.gov.ph

The Pag-IBIG Fund reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any informality or accept each bids as may be considered advantageous to the Fund. Further, the Pag-IBIG Fund assumes no obligation whatsoever to campaigns or indemnify the bidders for expenses or losses that may be incurred in participating in this bidding.

(Sgd.) LIBERTY L. ESLABON-CLARET
Vice President
Provident Operations – NCR South
Chair, Disposal Committee

DONATE TO OPERATION SMILE VIA MEGALINK ATMS

Donations to Operation Smile Philippines (OSP), the international medical charity that provides reconstructive surgery for indigent children, are now accepted through some 2,700 MegaLink ATMs countrywide. The country's leading ATM consortium has entered transactions for donations to the non-profit organization. MegaLink has also undertaken the project for free, enabling 11.4 million ATM cardholders to support the cause with any amount, almost everywhere. Photo shows OSP chair and LCPB president Ramon Ty and MegaLink president and CEO Benjamin P. Tolentino shaking hands on the project.

EAST TIMOR PRESIDENT VISITS GMA VILLAGE

Engineer Dan Lachmera and East Timor President and Nobel Peace Prize Winner Dr. Jose Ramos-Horta, visited GMA Village, a completed housing community developed by ABS-CBN Lingkod Kapamilya Foundation Corp. in Sarmiento Memorial Annex, Iloilo. President Ramos-Horta visited this project to explore possibilities in replicating and enhancing social housing projects for East Timor.

CLARET BATCH 1968: UNITED@10

Claret School (QC) Class of 1968 is celebrating its 10th anniversary this coming Saturday, September 25, 7pm to dawn, at Tivoli Garden Resort Tagaytay. Photo shows the alumni September meeting (standing from left) Pareng Francisco, James Clemente, Sil Sotto, Bong Liban, Ronny Jimenez, Frank Fajardo, Jose Bugarin, Ramon Viana, Arnel Hidalgo, Jason Asuncion, Rudy Villanueva, Ana Sarmiento, Ben Dela Cruz (seated middle row from left) JoAnn Dayaw, Pearl Gutierrez, Pip Sosa, Linang Bernal, Cathy Sutil, Greg Dayrit, Anthony Cabungcal (seated foreground from left) Dino Gomez, Mike Mendoza.

Best Practices in IT Audit

Bits & Clips

A WELL-PLANNED INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT) audit is a competitive tool for efficiency and growth. It can serve as a blueprint and a roadmap in improving your business operations or as an advantage to attract more clients since most of them require their suppliers to have an IT audit due to regulatory requirements in their countries, like a company entering foreign markets or doing business with foreign clients, you need IT audit compliance aligned to Sarbanes-Oxley, ISO 17799, or other regulatory standards. The Center for Global Best Practices is holding a one-day pioneering seminar entitled, "Best Practices in IT Audit", scheduled on Friday, Oct. 15 at the Peninsula Manila, Makati City. The program will teach participants how to prepare for an IT audit, what to expect in an IT audit, how to deal with IT audit issues, and build an internal IT audit and monitoring program. Additionally, attendees will learn how to pre-empt third-party auditors' findings and avoid costly compensation guide provided in the brochure. The unique program will feature Ramon Del Rosario, Ph.D., SEVP, DISSP ExEC, founder and managing director of DigiThreat Solutions. An expert in risk analysis and risk management, he has a wide range of experience in the field of IT and Security, with over 15 years of experience as a security consultant in the Asia Pacific region and the Americas. He has handled numerous multi-billion dollar teams, trainings, programs and projects with U.S. government agencies, as well as across several industries such as telecommunications, banking, finance, and business process outsourcing companies. He holds several IT security certifications and has graduated from prestigious international institutions such as having certified fraud examiner certified forensic analyst, certified information systems security professional, and EnCase certified examiner. Interested participants may call 842-7188 and 58 or e-mail pesa.ph@up.org. For the complete details, registration, and list of the upcoming seminars, visit the website www.cgbp.org.

Transcending barriers with Acer's Aspire One

IN THIS DAY AND AGE OF EVER-CHANGING NEEDS AND WANTS FOR computing versatility and incomparable mobility, where peoples' needs to stay connected knows no geographical boundaries or circumstances, one needs a laptop computer that could outperform and outlast — and even out-price. If there ever was such a item — any branded computer out there in the market. Acer, one of the world's top computer manufacturers, went beyond the usual norms of personal computing by coming out with its own brand of "netbooks," or laptop computers that promise unparalleled mobility, performance, and reliability, coupled with minimal sacrificing quality and price, through a revolutionary product that would break barriers between people and technology: the Acer Aspire One. Setting its sights on almost all markets, whether professionals, extremely mobile people, academians, first-time computer users, or even those who need another computer that they could bring anywhere like in coffee shops or even parks, the all-new, Internet-centric Acer Aspire One was conceptualized with the idea of making users' personal computing activities a remarkably easy and totally enjoyable and cool experience, especially for first-time users. Out despite its pint-sized proportions, the Acer Aspire One remains no ordinary laptop, with its stylish design that provides uninterrupted online access no matter where you are. Check out www.pcworx.com.ph for a more realistic appreciation of what the Acer Aspire One is truly capable of. Go ask the trusted Acer reseller near you and find out what this new computing dynamo from Acer is up to.

Philippine Economic Zone Authority

Roces Building corner San Luis Street, Pasay City Metro Manila, Philippines
Telephone (632) 841-1000 • 841-2001 • Facsimile (632) 841-1005
E-mail: info@peza.gov.ph • Website: www.peza.gov.ph

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

Supply and Delivery of Various I.T. Equipment (PEZA-HO-2010-01)

1. The Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA), through its Corporate Operating Budget for CY 2010 intends to apply the sum of PHP 10,000,000.00 being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the Supply & Delivery of various I.T. Equipment (lots) received or issued on the date hereof is authorized by reported at the opening.
2. The PEZA now invites bids for the above Supply and Delivery. Delivery of the GOODS is required within thirty (30) calendar days from the receipt of the Notice to Proceed is contained in Section VI of the Bidding Documents. ITB.
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act (RA) No. 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to associations or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act (RA) 5183 and is open to prospective bidders as defined in Section 5 of the RA 9184 and specified in the Bidding Documents.
4. Interested bidders may obtain further information from PEZA and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below during office hours from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested bidders upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of Two Thousand Pesos Only (PhP 2,000.00) and submitted a qualified copy of their PhilGEPS Registration Certificate. The method of payment will be cash basis only. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
6. The PEZA will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on 07 October 2010, 2:00 p.m. at the 8th Floor, Board Hall, PEZA Building, Roces Boulevard corner San Luis St., Pasay City.
7. Bids must be delivered on or before the said date and time specified in the Bidding Documents. Late bids shall not be accepted.
8. All Bids must be accompanied by a bid security in the form and in the amount stipulated in the Bidding Documents, which shall be in the amount of not less than 2.0% of the ABC – in the form of cash, certified check, manager's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit in the amount of not less than 2% of the ABC. Bank Bids shall not be accepted.
9. Bid opening shall be on 21 October 2010, 2:00 p.m. at the 8th Floor Board Hall, PEZA Bldg., Roces Blvd. corner San Luis St., Pasay City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders' representatives who choose to attend.
10. In case any of the above dates is declared a special non-working holiday, it will automatically be reset on the next working day.
11. The PEZA reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Philippine Economic Zone Authority
Bids and Awards Committee Secretariat
5/F PEZA Building, Roces Boulevard corner San Luis St., Pasay City
Tel/Fax No.: 841-1000 / Telefax No.: 551-0067
e-mail: bac@peza.gov.ph
website: www.peza.gov.ph

(PEZA - September 23, 2010)

PHILIPPINE HEALTH INSURANCE CORPORATION
Citystate Centre, 709 Shaw Boulevard, Pasig City, 1604 Philippines
Telephone Nos. 441-7442 to 44 • Telefax No. 441-7445
Website: www.philhealth.gov.ph • E-mail: info@philhealth.gov.ph

NOTICE FOR TO APPLY FOR REGISTERED PHILHEALTH ACCREDITATION SERVICE PROVIDERS
No. 010-2010-009-IT

REQUEST FOR PURCHASE OF IT ACCREDITATION SERVICES

The Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (Philhealth), a Government Owned and Controlled Corporation (GOCC) existing by virtue of R.A. 7875 as amended, mandated to ensure sustainable, affordable and progressive health insurance for all Filipinos, is undertaking the Accreditation Project for Health Care Providers and invites and submit the required documents for accession to the Philhealth regional database. The purpose of the registration is for advance Eligibility Checking of IT Service Providers.

The Eligibility Check shall be based on the submission of the required documents to Philhealth Regional Office Nos. 1 to 16 and the National Capital Region Offices (NCRO) I to IV, and Central Office (CO) I to III, and Regional Offices (RO) I to XII, and ARMM.

The evaluation shall consider the following:
a. Applicable qualifications of the IT Service Provider and associates in case of joint ventures, including successful systems development projects performed with a government agency;
b. Qualifications of personnel who may be assigned to the job and/or project and complexity of the undertaking; and
c. Current workload relative to capacity.

A complete set of Registration and Eligibility Documents may be obtained from September 23 – 29, 2010 by interested IT Service Providers at the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of Two Thousand Pesos Only (P2,000.00). The application fee shall be charged to cover administrative costs for processing the IT Service Providers registry database. The prospective IT Service Provider or the authorized representative shall receive the application documents personally.

Registration forms and eligibility requirements must be submitted to the Secretariat the Bids and Awards Committee for Consulting Services (BAC) on October 15 – 21, 2010, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Certificate of Registration shall be issued by Philhealth through the BAC, after determination of eligibility of the prospective IT Service Provider.

All particulars relative to the Eligibility Check shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations Part I (IRR-A). Philhealth reserves the right to review the qualifications of service providers prior to or during the procurement process.

Philhealth assumes no responsibility whatsoever in compensate or indemnify prospective IT Service Providers for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their respective documents. Whatever, even with the existence of the expiry validity of prospective IT Service Providers, the processing of IT Services shall still be open to all registered and non-registered prospective suppliers and service providers for a transparent and competitive procurement process.

Secretariat for the Bids and Awards Committee of the Central Office
MA. ANDREA HERRERA
BAC - CO Operations Head
Philhealth Bldg., Roces, Quezon City
Tel. (02) 441-7442 local 1122 and 1132
e-mail: bac_consulting@philhealth.gov.ph
Facsimile No. 441-7445
www.philhealth.gov.ph

Atty. RAY ERNESTO V. BELTRAN
Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee for Consulting Services

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
Regional Office No. IV-A
3rd Endorsement Bldg. V. Rosa Forest, Calamba City
Telefax Nos.: (049) 545-0301

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office applications for Alien Employment Permits:

Name and Address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National to be Employed/Alien	Position
1. PUBLIPHIL-BRAND MANILA PROCESSING CENTER, INC. FPIP Rizal, Rizal	Mr. Kevin Ian Chang Bernier	Marketing Manager
2. TOYOTA MOTOR PHILS. CORPORATION Mfg. Alabang-Zapote Road, Muntinlupa, Metro Manila, Alabang	Mr. Yo Eguchi Japanese	Vice President Corporate Planning Group for Vehicle Logistics
3. MITSUBISHI CORPORATION Bldg. Ayala Avenue, Makati, Legaspi	Mr. Kuni Joseph Hadzi Nemeno	Marketing Director
4. SUMITOMO (PHILIPPINES), INC. (UP) Commercial Condominium Corp., Cubao, Quezon City	Mr. Yuji Odai Japanese	Vice President for Environmental Affairs
5. ARALCO DEVCES IRON TRADE, INC. (UP) Commercial Condominium Corp., Cubao, Quezon City	Mr. William James Kirkwood Americano	Purchasing Manager
6. GREENLIFE & FOREST FOUNDATION, INC. Bldg. Ayala Ave., Cubao, Quezon City	Mr. Isao Tomikawa Japanese	Chairman
7. SUMA-INDUSTRY, INC. #191 Commercial Bldg., Pasay, Quezon City, Cubao	Mr. Fumio Kawabata Japanese	Consultant
8. VISIONS APPAREL, INC. Industrial Park, San Juan, Cubao, Rizal	Mr. Tae Kun Hong Korean	Office Manager

If you have any information/objection to the above mentioned applications please communicate with the Regional Director.

ATTY. RICARDO S. MARTINEZ, JR., CESO III
Regional Director

(DOLE - September 23, 2010)

Gov't to start talks with US firm on Clark project

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—American firm Admiral Energy LCC has passed the bidding requirements for the nominal 2 project at the Diosdado Macapagal International Airport.

At such, same-you Clark International Airport Corp. will soon start negotiations with Admiral, which plans to build and manage terminal 2 under a joint venture with CIAC.

"We are allowed to do limited negotiation with the best passing bidder," CIAC Chair Hector Manalo said here on Tuesday.

Admiral Energy met the eligibility technical and financial requirements, according as well the minimum investment of P6.5 billion to develop terminal 2, said Victor Jose Lazatin, CIAC president and chief executive officer.

Admiral offered an investment of P12.4 billion, an upfront payment of P9.98 million, and a minimum guaranteed annual payment of P261 million, Lazatin said.

"We can say that our bid base is computed by the first quarter of 2010," he said.

Terminal 2 seeks to accommodate seven million passengers a year. The current terminal's load is 4 million passengers a year.

The BIDA used to be an airport of the US 180 Air Force until Sept. 30, 1991 when the Senate voted not to renew the extension of the 1947 Philippine-US military base agreement.

The US military left an airport that is 2,300 hectares to 620, equipped with two runways 3.5-kilometers long each.

The terminal 2 project is being pursued in line with the government's designation of DMIA as the country's port of entry in the open skies policy set to be signed by Southeast Asian countries in December, CIAC officials said.

CIAC executive vice president Alexander Cruz-Gomez, who also chairs the joint venture selection committee, said the committee would do post-qualification evaluation of Admiral Energy in 15 days.

He said CIAC can conduct another bidding or look for a new needy if negotiations for the second project should the company fail the post-evaluation phase.

Lazatin said in a statement that two other bidders, Synergy International Enterprises Corp., UTS and Philippine Regional Investment Development Corp.—failed to pass the eligibility requirement under the competitive selection process of the joint venture guidelines.

CIAC officials earlier expected that 11 private firms joined the prequalification conference in July.

NFA pressed to buy more palay from farmers

By Amy S. Raros

THE GOVERNMENT IS PRESSING THE National Food Authority to buy more palay from local farmers, pushing the rice-grain procurement volume to as much as 2 million metric tons, according to Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap.

"We will do our best. If we can buy 2 million [MT], we will buy 2 million [MT]," Yap said yesterday during the Bienvenido Breakfast Forum.

"[It] just hasn't to push the NFA to buy more because that is also costly of cleaning and [current local] support," he added.

The NFA buys clean and dry palay at P17 a kilo, but Yap added that the state-owned food agency is also buying wet palay with as much as 39-percent moisture content.

Last week, the NFA announced that it would double its palay procurement target this year to 2 million MT, equivalent to 3.8 percent of the total target palay output this year of 17.3 million MT.

With this planned increase, Yap said he would meet with concerned agencies to ensure the availability of funds required to support NFA's aggressive palay buying, particularly in Eastern Visayas, where the typhoon Frank struck the rice-producing region last month.

Initially, the government has earmarked P6.3 billion to cover the procurement of 500,000 MT of palay.

According to Yap, the Department of Finance has already secured OA that it would "augment" the planned increase to local palay buying.

"Under the DOF, whatever we can procure it also going to be taken against the deficit we will import. I told them just to worry, because if we buy more, we are also buying rice cheaper [compared to] having in the international market even with the price at P750 [per ton]," Yap explained.

Yap also disclosed that the Philippines will continue to import rice for next year's buffer stocks, even as the NFA is expected to end with a rice stockpile that is enough for about 27 days.

National daily consumption is pegged at 33,150 MT.

Yap noted that what had saved the country this year from the global food crisis was the government's move to "early procurement and early buying," adding that the Philippines may continue to do this in 2009.

Without citing a specific timetable, Yap said the government would buy at "an opportune time" when the prices and volume of the staple are more favorable.

As of Sept. 18, prices of Thai 100-percent B grade white rice, the world's major benchmark for global trade, was quoted at only $700 a ton.

The Philippines usually begins its import rice in December.

Batanes throws hat into BPO ring

By Michelle V. Ramos

BASCO, BATANES—AGRICULTURE has always been the main source of livelihood here, but the local government says the province must be counting one of the country's major cities for business process outsourcing (BPO) investments.

Batanes Gov. Telesforo Castillejos has expressed optimism that Batanes could attract investors in the Typhoon-prone province and thus diversify the province's income sources to include services.

"Investing investors will provide more employment opportunities for the people here," Castillejos said yesterday in a briefing with representatives of the National Economic and Development Authority who are leading the Batanes economy.

Batanes is part of the Cagayan Valley Region, whose unemployment rate—two-thirds of the labor force.

The region posted a relatively decent growth of 6.8 percent last year, driven mainly by growth in palay and corn production, and poverty incidence of 5 percent.

To shift to services, the provincial government has introduced programs to help farmers—the indigenous people of Batanes—develop the skills needed to get employed in BPO companies such as call centers and medical transcription firms, he said.

The provincial government, for instance, has tied up with the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (Tesda) and private sector-run schools, which are encouraged to offer courses in computer, communication and information technology skills of farmers.

Batanes was also willing to provide tax-free privileges to BPO companies that will set up shop in Batanes.

Also, the provincial government has government offices, especially the Board of Investments and the Department of Finance, to help promote Batanes as a BPO investment site and to grant tax incentives to possible investors.

"We believe that the jobs that investors will provide will yield more economic benefits for our people than the taxes we can collect from these businesses," Castillejos said.

Castillejos said Batanes already has the basic infrastructure needed for BPO firms to settle here— full electrification of barangays and reliable Internet service.

On the frequent typhoons, Castillejos said Batanes does not see a problem since the buildings here are built to withstand the elements.

The governor also took pride in the friendly nature of Ivatanes and the zero crime rate in the province.

But the governor admitted that the province still needed to improve its human resources to cater to BPO companies.

He said this was why the local government was promoting and organizing skills training programs.

Recently, he said, about 200 Batanes were asked to take a qualifying exam given by Software Innovators International Group (SVI), a BPO company that has been in the Philippines for years but is eyeing to expand to new sites in the provinces.

Of the examinees, he said that only 90 passed.

A BPO company normally requires a minimum of 150 workers for each site to be considered to do business in an area.

Castillejos said that of the average 1,000 college graduates that Batanes produces every year, 60 to 70 percent leave the province to pursue nonprofessional employment opportunities in other places, mostly in Metro Manila and abroad.

"If we can attract more private sector investors here starting with those engaged in BPO, then less human would want to migrate somewhere else," Castillejos said.

RP firms' foreign investments under watch

From page B1

rities—registered with the SEC.

Also, there are a total of 26 pre-need firms with licenses to sell pre-need instruments, said the SEC.

A pre-need firm encourages people to save for future needs. Investing in a pre-need product could pay for an investor's future education, pension or memorial requirements. Pre-need plans are pooled in a trust fund that guarantees payment of benefits to plan holders. Trust funds manage the fund, investing it in different instruments.

Based on the SEC's guidelines on the management of trust funds released in 2007, pre-need firms are allowed to invest in financial products issued by foreign institutions in the Philippines, using up to 15 percent of the total fund basis liquidity.

Some of the more common instruments are bonds issued by the government of any foreign country with which the Philippines has diplomatic relations. The bonds must have an investment grade credit rating of triple B-plus, from a reputable international credit rating agency or by international organizations such as Asian Development Bank or International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

Trust funds could also be invested to placed in corporate bonds registered in another country with an investment grade credit rating of A or better, and in collateralized mutual funds with positive fund performances for the past three consecutive years.

Rules a 2008 SEC Memorandum Circular, mutual funds are also allowed to invest in foreign instruments, such as bonds issued by a foreign government with a credit rating at par with the rating of the Republic of the Philippines' bonds; or bonds registered in another country with a credit rating of Aaa or AAA (highest quality) from an international credit rating firm.

Buffett bets $5B on Goldman ...

From page B1

independent investment banks on Wall Street, won approval from the Federal Reserve to change their status to bank holding companies.

By becoming commercial banks, the two companies avoided the fate of Bear Stearns and Lehman Brothers—the first taken over by a fire sale and the second now bankrupt—by giving them broader access to borrow federal money and the ability to build a stable base of deposits.

But it also comes with closer regulatory oversight that would likely limit its ability to generate sky-high profits.

Berkshire's beaten-up stock in Goldman fell pay 10 percent and can be bought back at any time at 10 percent premium. The warrants allow Berkshire to buy $5 billion in common stock at $115 per share any time over the next five years.

Goldman's shares rose $4.27, or 3.5 percent, to close at $126.08 Tuesday in the regular trading session, and jumped another $5.45, or 4.6 percent, to $131.53 in after-hours trading following the announcement of Buffett's investment.

At last report, Berkshire had total assets of nearly $270 billion, including stakes in companies such as Wells Fargo & Co., American Express and The Washington Post Co. AP

IMF: High inflation a bigger ...

From page B1

that bill equivalent to 3.2 percent of their gross domestic product—or $66 billion. The Philippines is among the net oil importers.

But 42 net food-importing countries, the rise in their food bill was estimated at 3.8 percent of GDP—or $77.4 billion.

"From a macroeconomic perspective, we see the effects in weakening balance-of-payments positions and national budgets—and acceleration of inflation," Strauss-Kahn said. He noted the worsening of the debt impact of rising consumer prices especially on the poor.

The costs of the fiscal policy response to the food and fuel crisis also have continued to increase, the IMF paper said, noting that countries had responded to rising prices primarily by reducing taxes and tariffs, increasing universal subsidies, expanding transfer programs, and increasing public sector wages.

"Faced with these risks, statistics cite world must do more," Strauss-Kahn said. "We need to continue to focus on the domestic and international level to guard against excessive inflationary and budget pressures, while at the same time, helping the poor."

Asian shares up on Berkshire ...

From page B1

rassing early losses as an anticipated announcement of government measures to curb food-selling near foreign investors who had been betting on price falls scrambling to cover their positions.

The dollar trimmed gains against the yen on comments about the effectiveness of the US bailout plan.

The US currency has retreated against the yen and euro this month as the crisis in the financial sector gathered pace, highlighted by last week's collapse of Lehman Brothers and the $85 billion rescue of insurance giant AIG.

The dollar cost 0.1 percent to 105.64 yen, off a session high of 105.90 yen. The euro-sell 0.3 percent to $1.4687 after a low of $1.4686.

US crude for November delivery rose 28 cents to $109.16 a barrel. Losses on Tuesday had followed a record surge of nearly 16 percent in the new expired October contract on Monday. Reuters

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PROF. ALEJANDRO SANTOS C. FERRARIS is the author of the internationally published book on entrepreneurship called Entrepreneurial Relations. He hosted a television program on business and co-hosted a TV show on entrepreneurship called Money Talks. In the Asian region, he is often referred to as Entrepreneurship Guru of Philippines. He is an active independent director of the boards of directors of several Philippine companies which range from manufacturing, construction, consumer management, banking, pharmaceutical and high technology.

He has been an educator for over 30 years and has taught in the University of the Philippines, Ateneo de Manila University, University of Western Ontario in Canada and the Asian Institute of Management (AIM). He was the school dean of the Graduate School of Business of AIM. He was the Center for Entrepreneurship, Executive Education and the Center for Development Management.

Prof. Ferraris holds a BS degree from the Ateneo de Manila University and a Masters in Business Administration from the University of the Philippines. He has completed the academic requirements and passed the comprehensive examinations of a program that leads to a Doctorate in Business Administration in the University of the Philippines.

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LIKE WINE, COFFEE OR TEA, the deliciousness and superiority of chocolate is largely dependent on the concept of terroir.

The French coin is still best defined by a blend, White Hershey Jerome Philipson, who says: "Terroir is the combination of the natural environment, land, climate, the traditional fermentation treatment to produce something with the specific influences of direct land environment on to the taste of food."

Simply put, cacao grown under different geographical settings or "terroir conditions" will produce chocolate with very distinct differences in taste, color, aroma, texture, mouth feel and flavor.

KITCHEN RESCUE

Maggie Aguinaldo

From Hunan tofu to Angus beef burger

THREE THREE CHOICES ARE IN Quezon City, Makati and Mandaluyong. Two are Chinese restaurants with entirely different markets, and the third a mixed-and-mixed meal house.

The Super Bowl—A chain found in malls. The outlet visited is on the third level of The Gateway Annex Center, Quezon City (tel. 913-8828 and 913-8964.)

THE QUIET DINER

RESTOS AT A GLANCE

The dining area is in Chinese red and black. Its single round table by the door has on top of it "Instant Asian" en route to a (needs) herculean effort to move it around. The air-conditioning unit

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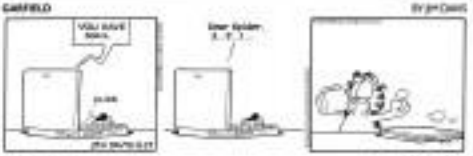

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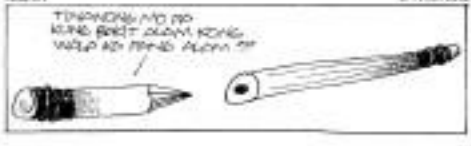

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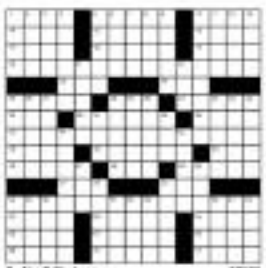

By Alan P. Olschesky
Huntington Beach, CA

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku By Dave Green

			1					
8		3		2			4	
				7			9	5
		1				7		8
				4				
3		7				4		
2	5			3				
	7			5		8		6
					4			

Difficulty Level ★★★

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.cs-dokus.com

Answer to previous puzzle

1	2	4	6	7	5	9	3	8
9	7	6	3	8	4	2	5	1
3	8	5	2	1	9	4	6	7
2	4	9	7	6	1	5	8	3
5	6	1	8	5	3	7	2	4
8	3	7	4	5	2	6	1	9
7	1	2	5	9	6	3	4	9
4	5	3	1	2	7	8	9	6
6	9	8	9	4	8	1	7	2

Chocolate buffet

DINING OUT

THE PENINSULA MANILA (2809 Makati) brings back Chocolate Buffet until the end of December, Fridays and Saturdays, 6:30 p.m. to 12 midnight. The buffet includes complimentary cup of coffee or tea. Children 12 years old and younger will enjoy a 50 percent discount. A variation of traditional chocolate delights in the Peninsula Chocolates & Champagne. Junior chocoholics can also have all the chocolate they want along with a Spider Boy Float or milk shake of their choice. Call 887-2888, extensions 6732 and 6749 (The Lobby) or 6880 (restaurant reservations).

Pinoy favorites

Bistro Dak offers Crispy Lumpia, Crispy Dinuguan, Binukadkad na Tilapia, Sizzling Sandubot Kare-kare, Crispy Beef Salad, Tomato, Onion, Cilantro and Kesong Puti Salad, Smoked Inihaw Eggplant with Salted Egg, Smoked Inihaw Talong, Smoked Inihaw Tahong, Kinilaw Salad, Chili Salad, Laing, Chicken Tinola, Pinakbet, Lomi, Pancit Canton, Pancit Luchao, Kanin Dak in all Westgate Center, Filinvest Alabang, Muntinlupa City. Call 850-3510.

Fish Bowl Bistro (35, Granada II, Makati City; tel. 7256650) offers Baby Back Ribs with Vanilla Sauce.

CRUSTASIA

Crustasia offers Roasted Garlic Crab. Other must-try dishes are Thai Crab Sarunghon, Szechuan, Vietnamese Butter-Ginger, Singaporean Black Pepper Crab, Chili Crab, Kapampangan Salt & Pepper Crab, Crab Marinera, Yang's Thai Curry Crab, White Pepper Crab, Deep Fried Crab and Pan-fry Seafood Delights, Bo Ssäm, lobsters. Crustasia branches are located at Powerplant Mall, Rockwell Center, tel. 7289463; Shangri-La Plaza Mall/EDSA, tel. 9136886; The Podium, Ortigas Center, tel. 633 0827; Trinoma Mall, North Triangle, tel. 951 1605 and Cuneta de las Palmas, Alabang Town Center, tel. 7722968.

TEPPANYAKI SALAD

Try the Teppanyaki Salad (tuna topping/fresh salad greens, sautéed onions, eggplant and fresh tomatoes) at the following UCC Coffee branches: Paseo Center, Makati City (810-4388); Corinthian Hills, Quezon City (634-6946) and Fortune Town Center, The Fort (845-1340).

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'We're retired, we're here to have fun,' says Albert Wu of Kaiseki Japanese Cuisine at The Fort

Japanese, but not fusion

By Irene C. Perez

IF YOU GET A MEDIcine craving for traditional Japanese dishes, check out Kaiseki Japanese Cuisine at The Fort.

Definitely nothing of the popular "fusion" menus here, says owner Albert Wu.

"We offer real Japanese food that most haven't seen anywhere else. We just do some tweaking to make it fit the Pinoy palate. Say, the sashimi is not as coarse as it should be."

Couple Albert and Jo Wu, looking for something to do after retirement, put up the Japanese restaurant six years ago. What started off as a less than 40-seater now has a top-notch floor on the third level.

Light meals

Teppanyaki or grilled dishes have always been part of the menu, used to be cooked in the kitchen. Now diners, especially kids, can delightfully watch as food is prepared by a teppan chef. It's pretty much like watching a live cooking show and seeing the finished products trickle off the pan.

MASTER! Kaiseki meals are healthy and filling, says manager Jo Wu (inset).

There's the same teppanyaki selection of chicken, tokneh, kobe and Singapore-style lapu-lapu meals to choose from, but also seafood like shabu-shabu, oysters, ika or squid, lobster tail, tempura or yasai, prawns and soba.

"Our seasoned Japanese chef, Mamoru Okuyo, makes the dishes as authentic as possible," says Albert. The signature roll Kaiseki or "concubine" of Boris Karo at The Fort. "They don't cook in their own cooute only

as they like it."

Crowd favorite

Kaiseki has a variety of sushi: the Maitza (eight kinds of inspected seafood), or pick your favorites from the bento or rice-shaped sushi—California (mango, crabsticks and lettuce), Spicy Magnum (tuna, cucumber, lettuce), Rin Tin (prawn), Tamago Sawada (egg, cucumber, mango, dressed and Unagi (eel).

The kids love the Curry Maki, a yummy sushi topped with shredded tokneh fry.

Healthy eaters

"Our menu is generally the healthy variety," says Kaiseki representative Jo Wu who has been in the Japanese restaurant business since the 80s. "Bestsellers are the very basic, grilled items."

Seasoned travelers are glad to find Kaiseki in Manila, says the couple.

"We're retired, we're here to have fun," says Albert. "But now, we're just pleasing to add a hobby next on the menu."

Kaiseki Japanese Cuisine is at The Fort, behind the SBC Fort. Call 4993305 or 4994092.

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From Hunan tofu to Angus beef burger

Restaurants page C3

nearly well, given a full house.

Staff—Very unsatisfactory service. We texted only about five people serving, surely not enough to cover a big hall, many of them giving unfriendly looks. It was so difficult to call their attention.

Service—Prime: was not readily served, not even one. A main dish was placed on the table ahead of the diners.

Suggested meal—Chinese food must be eaten when one has company, preferably three or four up, so he/she/it is very few dishes. Expect some on the table. Start with a mix of shanghai rolls, supreme siomai (P240). If adventurous, try Hunan tofu with Chili Pork Cutlets (P200) with so-called Super Veg Chow Mee (P195) for a big platter. For dessert, the usual Ginataan (P65) and Steamed Jelly with Fruits (P95).

Chinese coffee is not really worth. Have to forget on the lesser local and enjoy truly robust brewed or blended coffee with the popular mocha coke, Food for the Gods and more.

● Rating:

Tin Hau—moved from Manila Marchesa, Makati tel. 7588660.

The dining area, spacious, bright and quiet. Two glass aquariums by the entrance give the place a cool atmosphere. Tables have pink brocade cloth, chairs are rattan-like. Music (other than music) are an endurable. There are flatulent rooms for private parties, kind to bring kids here.

Staff—A courteous and accommodating chefs escort diners, their tasks given to tables when the staff is Chinese-impaired while hips and thick women's outfit that go up to there, take over. They are generous and smiling. The male restaurant supervisor readily comes when diners seem to be unattended.

Service—nearly impeccable and unobtrusive. Plates, drinks, dishes are introduced by the staff quietly. Yes is constantly for.

Suggested meal—they have dispensed with the daily buffet and instead offer regular set meals, periodic promo dishes on the higher scale and dimsum. We chose one of the set meals for 2—4 at P858. That consisted of a duo of appetizers, luncheon slice and lemon fruit with Grilled Chicken with Crispy Garlic, Steamed Bony Fillet with Almond Pork and Braised Vegetables, Beancurd with Mixed Vegetables and Shrimp Soup and Fried Rice with Chicken Fillet. Dessert was Mango Sago and Basil. Cost goes up to P1,008 depending on the number of diners, but dishes are added. Usual service charge and government taxes.

● Rating:

Mahi—a small, brand, stark dude. We visited the branch in Intramuros. Flavors, Shantique pal. 7712288 and 7712960).

This must-close restaurant is ideal for those who crave a little privacy and silence, to enjoy the good food it serves.

Staff—efficient and friendly, while unobtrusive. They greet diners by the door and lead them to tables.

Suggested meal—Sisiday are the house specialty. We remember Sisiday as among the first to introduce Angus beef and later, Wagyu. After all years, they have perfected them. Order a 6-ounce Wagyu at P980, which comes with vegetables, potatoes, soup of the day and house wine. Or take an 8-ounce Angus beef hamburger (P390) with Caesar salad, French fries and soup of the day. Saving room? Its centers room for dessert. But check the menu, if you please.

Tax, prevat service charge plus 10 percent for an celebrated. Seniors are equally honored.

● Rating:

One-stop shop for everything . . .

Restaurants page C3

So if there is such a thing as wine tasting, coffee and tea appreciation, there is such a thing as chocolate tasting and appreciation as well.

At Heavenly Chocolates, we encourage enjoying a rich cup of hot chocolate made from 64-percent cocoa single cocoa from Ecuador (strong, intense, full-bodied, bitter, smoky notes, good for rise-like chocolates); Ghana (smooth, unsophisticated, well established especially by children, a bit sweet); Ivory Coast (rich cocoa with nutty flavor, mixed and biscuit notes, hints of caramel, Ivory Coast serves one-third of the world's cocoa beans); Papua New Guinea (Madagascar vanilla cocoa, with distinct fruity notes of raisins, fruity dried fruit finish, well balanced); and West Indies (cocoa with floral notes, hints of dried flowers).

The chocolate "bar" is the brainchild of Philip Cano in Seville, Rhône Jean-Seville, Brother Odorard Benjamin Rolen, whose advice is to bring the experience of quality chocolates to everyone.

Heavenly Chocolates is the exclusive distributor of Jade Stone from Niigata prefecture Japan, which come in bitter, milk, honey-roast, toast, nuts, champagne, strawberry and matcha variants.

The resto also makes specialty chocolates cakes (I haven't tried them but will let you know if they're good), though their forte is drinking (tempting), warm chocolate drinks, cool chocolate parts, and with single origin chocolate features to make sure hot cocoa.

And for you, the resto also features chocolate-themed gift items such as chocolate bonsai and bowls filled like a chocolate jelly roll cake.

In short, they make to see themselves as the one-stop shop for all-out chocoholics.

I look forward to the arrival of their first shipment in October. Sure their beautiful striped dark and white chocolate chips and chunks, which look so good on cookies, muffins and cakes.

Call 8882206 or 0915-7865205.

For chocoholics

Hilda, here's your chocolate Fondue recipe from Heavenly Chocolates. I took the liberty of asking how a perfect cup of hot cocoa is done, as well as a recipe for a cold chocolate drink for all you chocoholics!

Giandaja Fondue

250 ml cream,
1 tbsp hazelnut paste
100 g chocolate bar/cue or 100ml of choice (at least 64 percent cocoa).

In a small saucepan, heat the cream over low heat, then add the chocolate until melted. Remove pan from heat and add a tablespoon of hazelnut paste and stir the mixture until everything is well mixed.

Serve the cream fondue into a serving bowl and surround it with your choice of fresh fruit pieces.

Pure Origin Hot Chocolate Drink

113 ml milk,
40-55 g chocolate (origin beans or 64-percent cocoa)
1 tbsp whipped cream (optional)

In a small saucepan, heat the milk until it just begins to simmer. Remove the pan from heat and whisk in the chocolate bar/cue until melted. Pour hot chocolate drink in a cup and top with a tablespoon of whipped cream.

Chocolate Chiller

250 ml milk
100 g ice
12 g cocoa powder (22 percent fat)
30-50 g sugar
1 scoop of chocolate ice cream (optional)

Place the milk, ice, cocoa powder and sugar in blender until well combined. Pour the cold mixture in a tall glass and top with a scoop of chocolate ice cream.

E-mail the author at irene.perez@inquirer.com.ph

Chefs' Secrets Revealed!
Want to know a secret?
"I don't believe in keeping recipes a secret. Life is too short for that," says Chef Joey Prats, chef-instructor and part owner of Symphony Sweets and Gourmet Desserts. And Chef Joey does exactly what he says by revealing the secrets to his to-die-for Chocolate Fill Tart, along with more recipes made especially for Chefs' Secrets & Favorite Recipes.
F&B World Magazine and Unilever Foodsolutions' first ever cookbook, Chefs' Secrets & Favorite Recipes, is a compendium of more than 50 Asian-inspired recipes created by 25 young and talented chefs. It includes helpful cooking tips, a glossary of cooking terms and ingredients, and a list of suppliers of specialty products, all of which are useful for both homemakers and professional cooks.
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CHEFS' SECRETS
FAVORITE RECIPES

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Fermin G. Velarde

Emmy telecast bombs in ratings and reviews

LOS ANGELES—THE 57th annual Primetime Emmys drew, ironically panned by critics as perhaps the worst ever, fell a big, fat ratings egg as well, with 16.5 million preferring to the smallest audience in the awards' history.

According to preliminary data from Nielsen Media Research, ABC's three-hour Sunday telecast, featuring major wins for "Mad Men" and "30 Rock," averaged 12.3 million viewers, falling just before the historic low of 12.3 million posted by the 1990 ceremony aired on Fox.

Sunday's telecast no doubt suffered from the fact that the shows and most prestigious of the nominees, including best drama "Mad Men," comedy champion "30 Rock" and winning actors from shows like "Lineage" and "Breaking Bad," represent programs that draw tiny viewers themselves.

ABC's dismal score was not helped by a presentation that critics largely disliked, especially its oddly scripted opening monologue shared by the reality-show hosts who served as collective emcees.

For the minutes Hosts Jon Stewart, Jeff Probst, Tom Bergeron and Heidi Klum joked about how they literally had nothing prepared to say.

This was followed with a gag that involved ripping off Klum's clothes. The bit was panned by reviewers as a "celebration of early eighties."

Reuters

By Marinel R. Cruz

THE WEEKLY REALITY TALENT search show "Shall We Dance" on TV5 recently got a major makeover.

It's static in Novaliches, Quezon City, underwent renovations, too, to complement the new format.

"We have a bigger dance floor," executive producer Nelson Alcantara said laughing. "The studio audience is now encouraged to dance, and we made room for that."

All judges said the new set is divided into three parts—dance floor in the center, judges' area on the right side and a mock set on the left where the hosts do their spiels.

The show, now in its fifth season (its 14 years!) has Lucy Torres-Gomez as host, with Victor Basa and Jess Rivilla.

Hip-hop, too

This season, the competing teams are performing ballroom, hip-hop, jazz and contemporary dances. For this, there is a new set of judges, as well: Eduth Lozano (ballroom); choreographer Douglas Barretto (contemporary and jazz); Jay Morris (hip-hop); and Regine Felicano.

When Inquirer visited, Gab Valenciano and partner Jennalyn Rodrigo

SHOWS B3

Sleepless in wonderful Zhengzhou

ZHENGZHOU, CHINA... IT'S LATE MONday night—no, early Tuesday morning. Just hours ago, we finished the third performance of "Cinderella" here... we're back in our hotel and everyone is in high spirits, because of the incredible way that the last two shows were received by local audiences.

This leg of the tour has been an interesting experience. In three sentences: One, I don't have to interpret (second to one at the big cities in Xian, where Lynn Zhang proved valuable last time); and the two is sweet besides. Two, there's barely any English spoken in this city. And three: the entire Filandanz operation consists of 10 (1 absolute company manager, 2 wardrobe heads, 1 associate stage manager, 1 production manager, 2 associate coordinating managers) are themselves, in varying degrees, having trouble getting their points across to local counterparts. If they are having a difficult time, where does that leave the rest of us?

Beautiful airport

Only days earlier, we landed at the beautifully designed airport here. I must say that most of the airports I've seen in China so far are sparkling new, efficient and well-designed, set to convince progressive.

This has become a regular conversation subject for my mother and me, since she was small. First thing I do when I land in Asia is call to let her know that I've arrived or that I'm leaving, and to say, "The airport is fantastic!"

It's the truth, and it makes her worry a bit less to know that the airport is modern, clean, and well put together. Hence, an airport leaf-down as an accurate reflection of the city I'm about to enter, but a good first impression helps.

Landing with a thud

The flight to Zhengzhou was not the smoothest in the world, though. There was quite a bit of turbulence en route (much of which I slept through)... in short, I don't remember the plane taking off because I was pretty much out even prior to its leaving the tarmac. The weather wasn't great, either. It wasn't raining, but there was quite a bit of cloud cover, which affected our entire life landed within a thud. Getting off the plane and retrieving our luggage was uneventful, but the car ride to the hotel would be a harbinger of things to come.

Media Huang, executive company manager, was on the greeting area to welcome us. We rolled our carry-on in the waiting van and were out almost the world also be my driver the whole time here. (I never got his name, he doesn't speak English, but he is a nice enough fellow, and cheered when I'd count from 1 to 10 in Mandarin on the way to our from the theater.)

BACKSTORY

Lee Salvoza

This leg of the tour has been an interesting experience

Speeding backwards

On the freeway, we passed our exit. The answer would be to take the next exit— that's what I was taught to do, and what I've always done. However, our driver decided to drive backwards. On the freeway. Enter Sadie Ortizco in "Cinderella") expressed his disapproval. The next exit, perhaps (and to make every driving in fact, every car experience) that made, I don't

or would attempt that

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2 MY BESTFRIEND'S GIRL	7 I.T.A.L.Y.
3 THE SISTERHOOD of the TRAVELLING PANTS 2	8 indieSow: TEACH ME to LOVE
4 DISASTER MOVIE	9 BABYLON A.D.
5 ROOM 213	10 100 FEET

ERMITA

1 THE SISTERHOOD of the TRAVELLING PANTS 2

2 DISASTER MOVIE	6 BANGKOK DANGEROUS
3 RIGHTEOUS KILL / 100 FEET	7 BABYLON A.D.
4 I.T.A.L.Y.	8 RESERVED
5 MY BESTFRIEND'S GIRL	9 RESERVED

METRO EAST

1 THE SISTERHOOD of the TRAVELLING PANTS 2	5 MY BESTFRIEND'S GIRL
2 I.T.A.L.Y.	6 BANGKOK DANGEROUS
3 100 FEET	7 BABYLON A.D.
4 DISASTER MOVIE	8 GRAVEDANCERS

NOVALICHES

1 ITALY	3 MY BESTFRIEND'S GIRL
2 BANGKOK DANGEROUS	4 LOST in BEIJING

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DASMARINAS

1 I.T.A.L.Y.	1 I.T.A.L.Y.
2 BANGKOK DANGEROUS	2 100 FEET
3 100 FEET	3 DISASTER MOVIE
4 DISASTER MOVIE	4 BANGKOK DANGEROUS

ANGELES

1 BANGKOK DANGEROUS	3 RIGHTEOUS KILL
2 I.T.A.L.Y.	4 BIG STAN

STARMILLS

1 BANGKOK DANGEROUS	4 RIGHTEOUS KILL
2 I.T.A.L.Y.	5 BIG STAN
3 FOR THE FIRST TIME	6 BABYLON A.D.

BACOLOD

1 BANGKOK DANGEROUS	1 BANGKOK DANGEROUS
2 I.T.A.L.Y.	2 I.T.A.L.Y.
3 BABYLON A.D.	3 BABYLON A.D.
4 DEATH RACE	4 DEATH RACE
5 BIG STAN	5 GRAVEDANCERS
6 JIBON	6 FOR THE FIRST TIME

Dance show . . .

to page 84

performed a hip-hop number. Mickey Jun, of "Enter Big Brothas," did a tango with Rakim Trinidad.

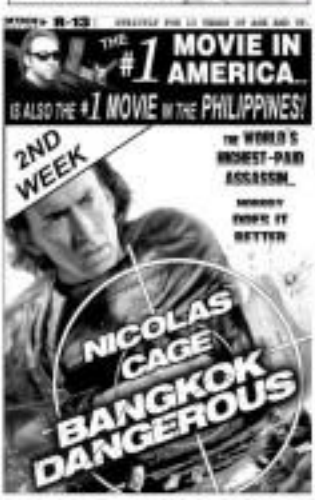
Jopay Pagsin of Ecobank Dancest danced the chacha with Mark Cruz, Jenelle Reyes and Stephanie Salinda did a jazz number, and Saicy Aguila, also from PEB, had a hip-hop number with Johnny Amat.

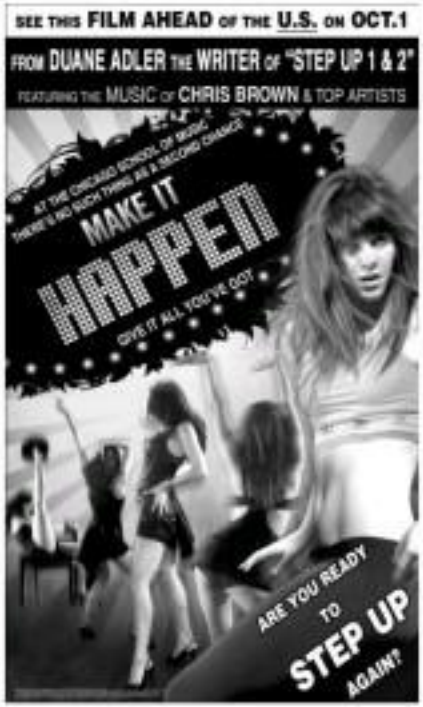
Hosed Lucy: "The stakes were the same as we did dancing, so expectations are higher."

"Shall We Dance" airs Sundays, 9 to 10 p.m.

Email: [redacted]@inquirer.com.ph

JOHN Avila, Lucy Torres-Gomez and Victor Basa





'A Very Special Love'

THE ROMANTIC COMEDY IS ABOUT A young bookworkerer who believes she will never meet Mr Right. She gets a job in a men's magazine and meets Miggy, who turns out to be the opposite of Prince Charming. Starring Sarah Geronimo and John Lloyd Cruz.

Sleepless . . .

Previous page D3

dumplings

Finally at the hotel (thankfully, we had been checked in ahead of time!) I was shown to my room, a beautiful suite with a wonderful view. The best part: a poker table in the corner and lots breakfast! Yummy access. A close second was the bed. I fell deeply in love with that bed. I stayed up late Sunday night watching a film called "Blood and Chocolate" on Star Movies (that, and CCTV-9 were the only English channels I could get) while eating delicious steamed pork dumplings! I fell asleep at around 2:30 a.m.

The next day, Muslin Mahab (my personal assistant) and I walked to the theater. We passed a row of optical shops (as if Guardian and Selmor had turned into Starbucks; there were so many). Across the street were quite a few mobile phone stores. The walk, on that very humid day took less than 10 minutes.

Do not touch

A few more things needed to be done at the theater but it was ready enough for a stopover (sound rehearsal for the singers with the orchestra) with the local musicians that were joining the two touring groups. Also, rehearsals for some technically complicated scenes.

The local crew turned out to be quite efficient. The main people had a difference on patience, though, and the touring heads ended up rather frustrated. On more than one occasion, Kitking I'm had to tell the heads, "You're not doing your job!" I never ever want to be on the wrong side of that woman.

An example of instructions not followed took place backstage. Prop trees with fake fruit were placed on a table in an adjacent hall. The locals were told to not touch the props, or the table. Well, someone thought the instructions were merely suggestions, and leaned on the table, sending the trays crashing down to the hard wood floor. No one, as far as I could observe, went near that table again.

Sensational audience

As I said, we did three performances here. Sunday's matinee audience was pretty much what we had gotten used to in China.... conservative during the show, but very demonstrative at curtain call. However, the evening audience was nothing short of sensational! Most of the parents from were followed by generous laughter and were almost always punctuated by applause. We couldn't believe it! I thought it was a fluke and that the Monday show would elicit the more usual response. But it was even better than Sunday night! It was wonderful!

Poker night

How did we celebrate? Sunday night, a few of us got together for poker. I won second place, with Guitarist J.C.Connell in third and Mr. Ty Hsiao winning. Last night, we played a few dice games and watched snippets of "Armitage" and "28 Weeks Later" on Star Movies.

By the time you read this, I will have spent a few days at home with my family and we start packing for a press trip to Thailand. The next China stop is Guangzhou, where we open Friday, Oct. 3. I can't wait!

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